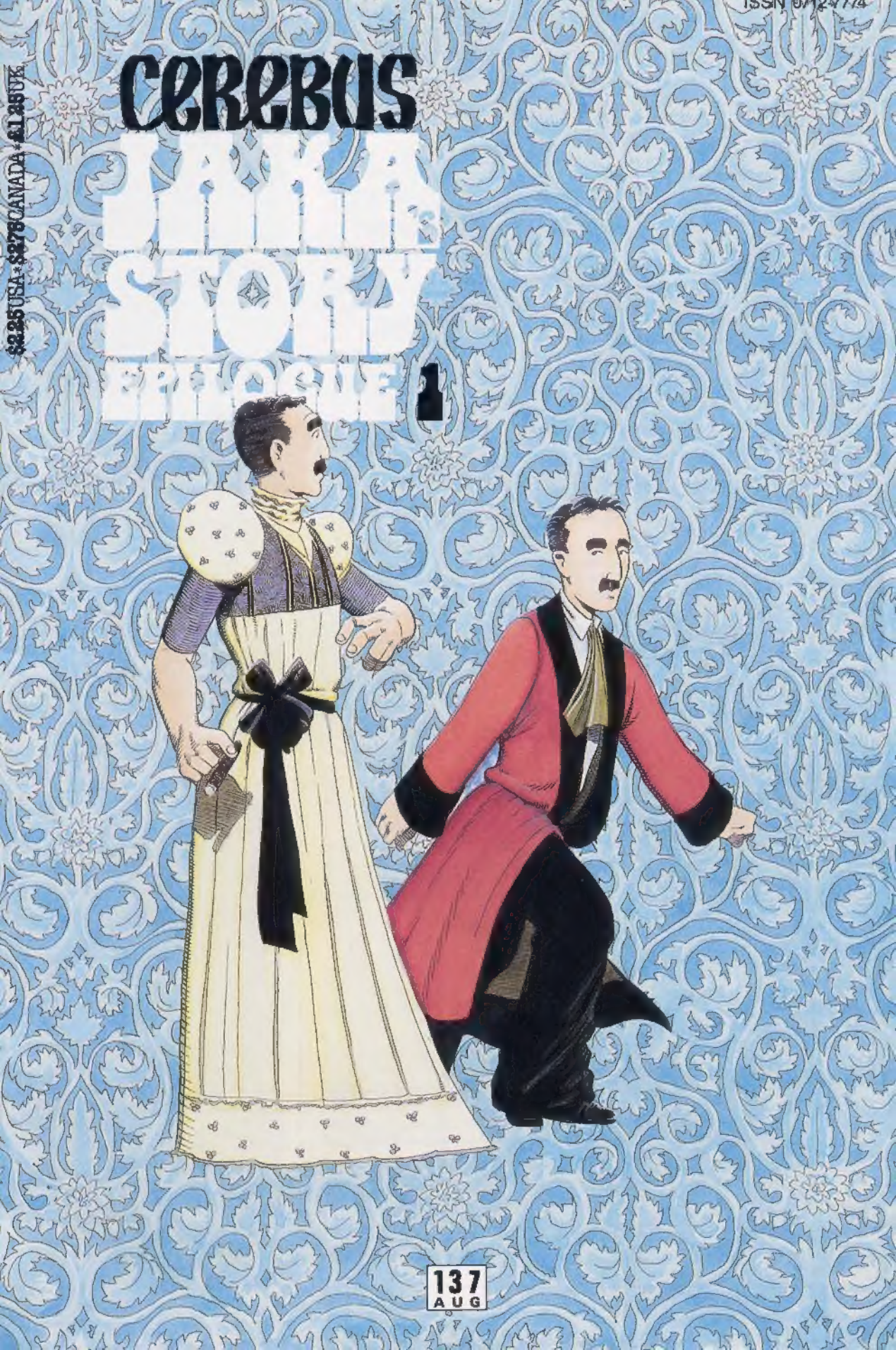
ISSN 0712-7974

# CEREBUS

# JAKA'S STORY

## PROLOGUE 1

$2.25 USA • $2.75 CANADA • £1.25 UK



137
AUG

# NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

So having resolved last September that we would do our best to get caught up on the two month cover-date lag and jump the cover dates here in July if we were still behind; incredibly, unimaginably, unbelievably today is July 12 and I have page 11 of the August issue done. The cover is being separated, the Preview pages are in and I've just finished proofing the letters page. I can't believe it. Really. Wow.

Ger and I would both like to thank everyone for voting for us in the Harvey and Eisner awards; most particularly the warehouse managers, retailers, editors, publishers etc. who nominated *Jaka's Story* for eight Eisners in spite of the differences of opinion we've had over the years many of which have been (and will continue to be) enunciated in this here space. The fact that the awards were cancelled at the last minute in no way diminishes the pleasant surprise of such a vote of confidence, from the "members opposite" (so to speak). Thank you, indeed.

As for the five Harvey nominations; unquestionably there is no greater honour than acknowledgement by one's peers, whatever the field. Again we thank everyone who voted for us and who voted for the book and who voted for the story. We sincerely hope everyone continues to enjoy the next one hundred and sixty three issues as much as they've enjoyed the last twenty-three. *More*, even.

Having said that I must say that I used to be one of those people who resented nominees who did not show up to receive their awards in person. I felt that right up until the 1986 Kirby Awards when Ger and I went to San Diego and LOST (*LOST! LOST! LOST!*) the best black & white and best art team awards. As everyone says, its an honour just to be nominated (and it *is*). But there is no question that *not* winning is a demoralizing and unhappy experience. Not winning in person is doubly demoralizing and unhappy. Awards are not a thing an artist would come up with; "Hey let's get together and vote to decide which of us is the best." It reduces individual, personal, idiosyncratic work to the level of an athletic event or the selection of a government. Jaime and Gilbert's work is Jaime and Gilbert. Chester's work is Chester. Our work is Dave and Ger. For *all* of us our lives are tied up in what we do. To vote Dave and Ger best-whatever is to slap Chester, Jaime, Gilbert, Dan and anyone else in the category in the face; albeit very lightly. If there are five nominees there are four losers and one winner; four slaps in the face and one pat on the back.

The year we won the Kirby award for Best Black & White I didn't really feel anything about it. It seemed an extravagant compliment; like the favourable review in the *Atlantic Monthly*. It felt like an awful lot to live up to. Watching your award-winning right hand draw a really stinkeroo face allows you to dismiss it as a fluke of some kind in pretty short order, of course.

By contrast, not having *Church & State* or either of us nominated for anything (we got Controversy of the Year from Capital City) having laboured for five years on it was a major downer as it must be for the dozens of guys who get nominated and never win and the hundreds who never even get nominated.

I, personally, would prefer that there just be an award given to the book or person who gets the most votes. One pat on the back, no slaps in the face. One award in each category and a listing of every book that received a vote in a ten page Buyer's Guide ad (paid for by the publishers) would help publicize a lot of good stuff that never gets seen by anyone and be a boost for many of the up-and-coming cartoonists and a lot of Small Press work.

Time to draw the cover for the *Jaka's Story* reprint volume.

'Bye.

CEREBUS

NO. 137 AUGUST 1990

**DAVE SIM**
President

**GERHARD**
Vice-President

**MONIQUE KAPTEIN**
Administrative Assistant

**JAKA'S STORY**
a novel

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**PROLOGUE**
(Cerebus 114)

•

**POGROM'S PROGRESS**
(Cerebus 115 to Cerebus 119)

•

**THE POET**
(Cerebus 120 to Cerebus 130)

•

**MYSTERY ACHIEVEMENT**
(Cerebus 131 to Cerebus 136)

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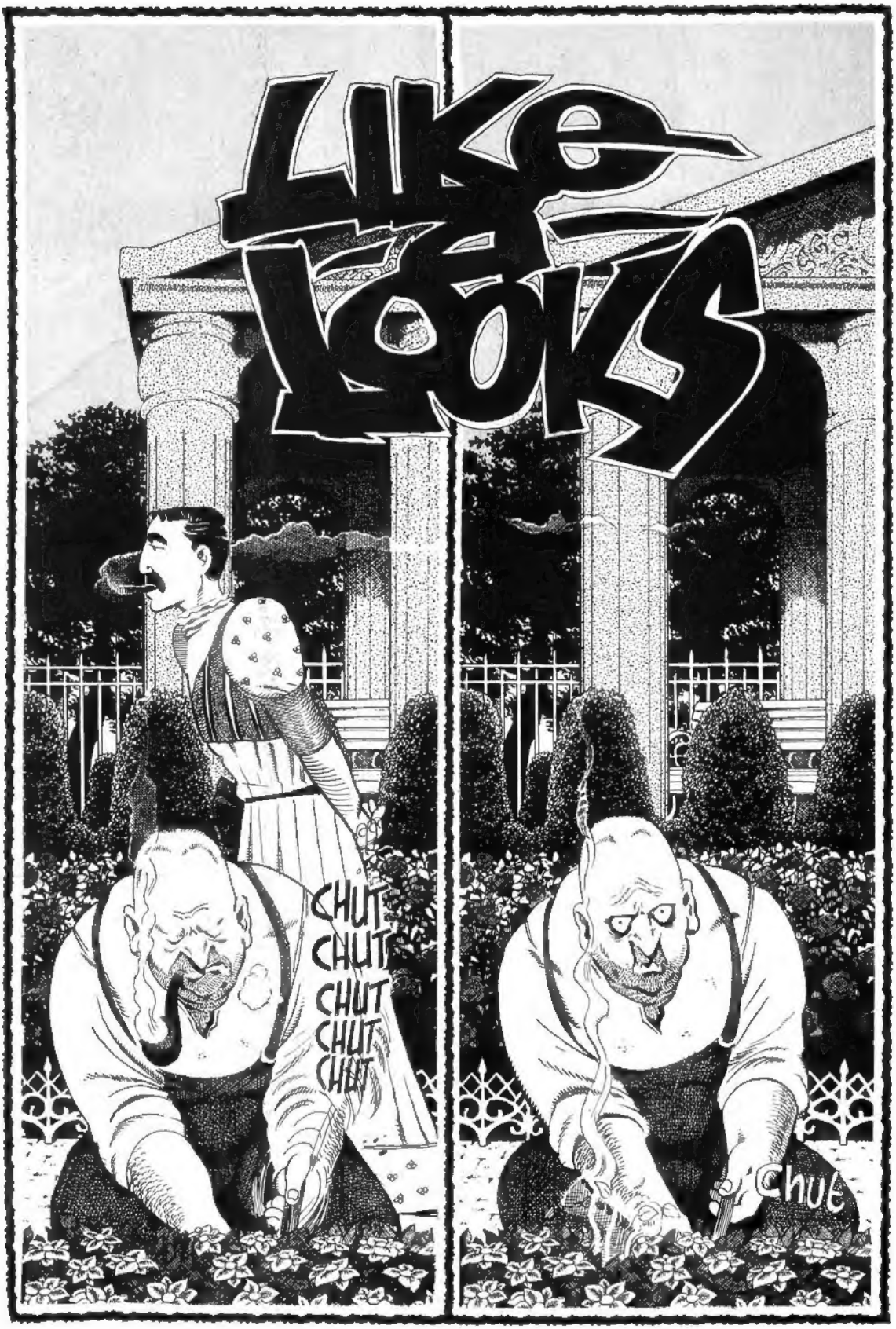
Like Looks
CHUT
CHUT
CHUT
CHUT
CHUT
Chut

FLICK
FLICK
CRINK
CRINK
CRINK

BLUP
BLUP
BLUP
BLUP
GULP
BLUP
BLUP
BLUP
TING

BAF
SMASH
CRASH
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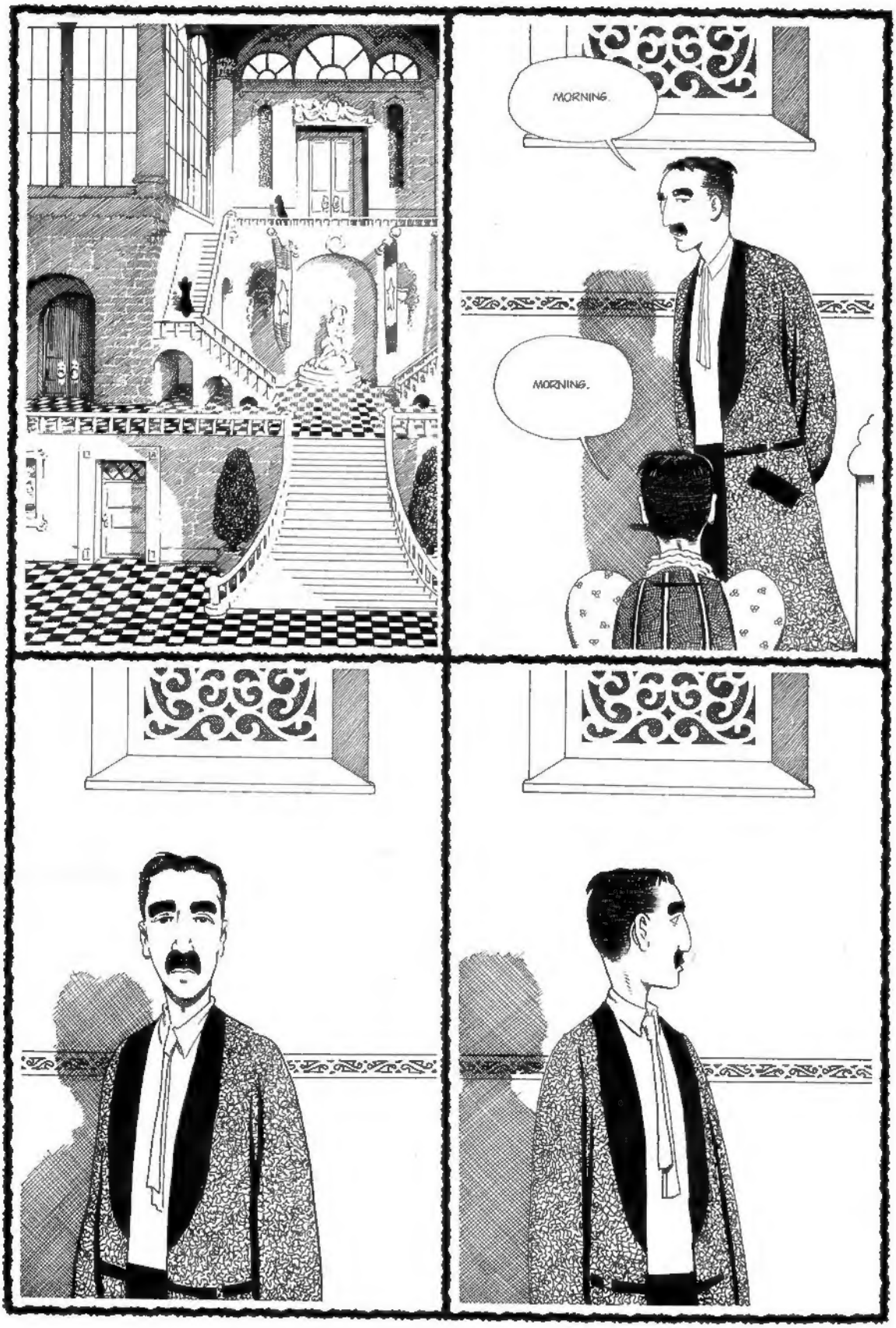
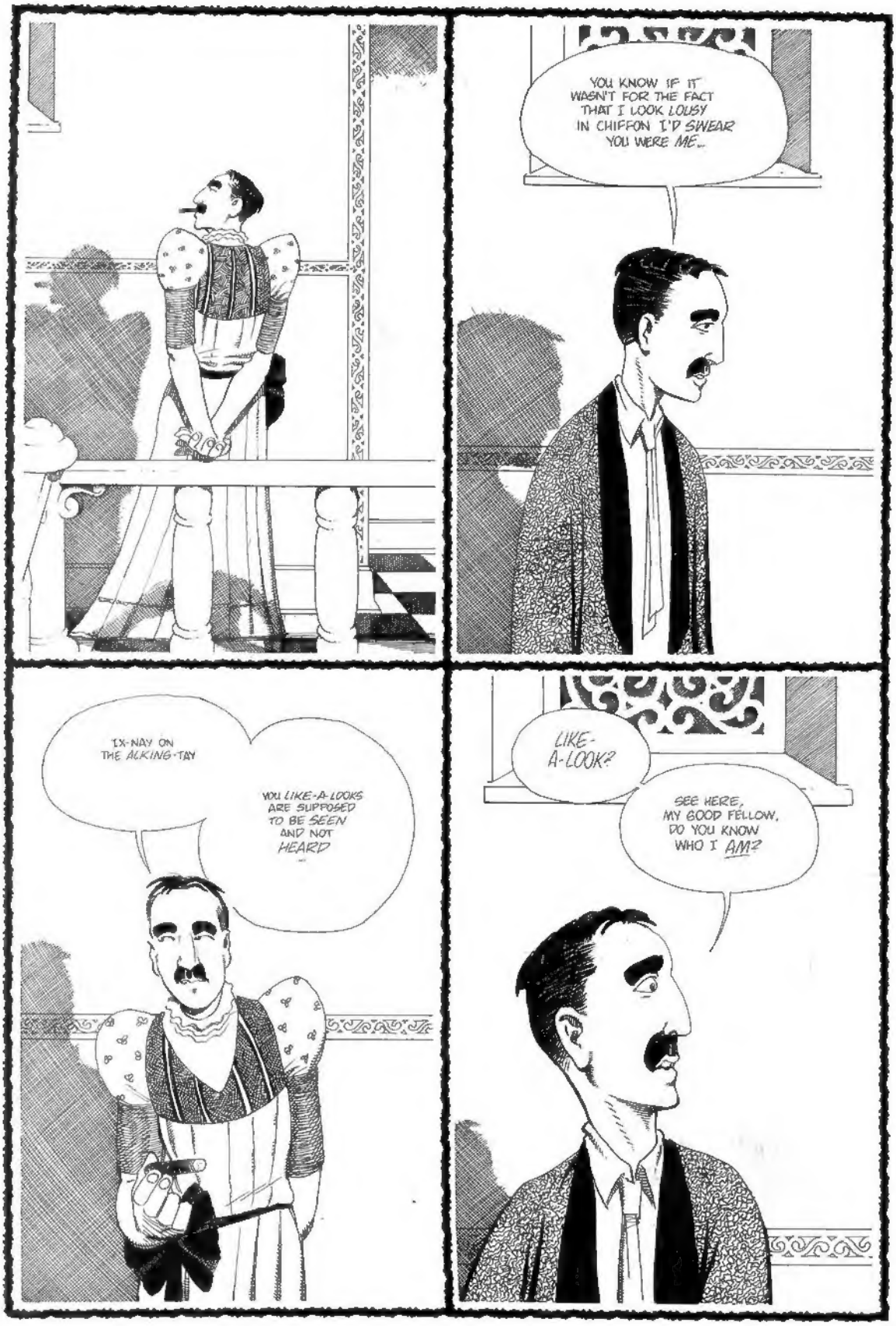
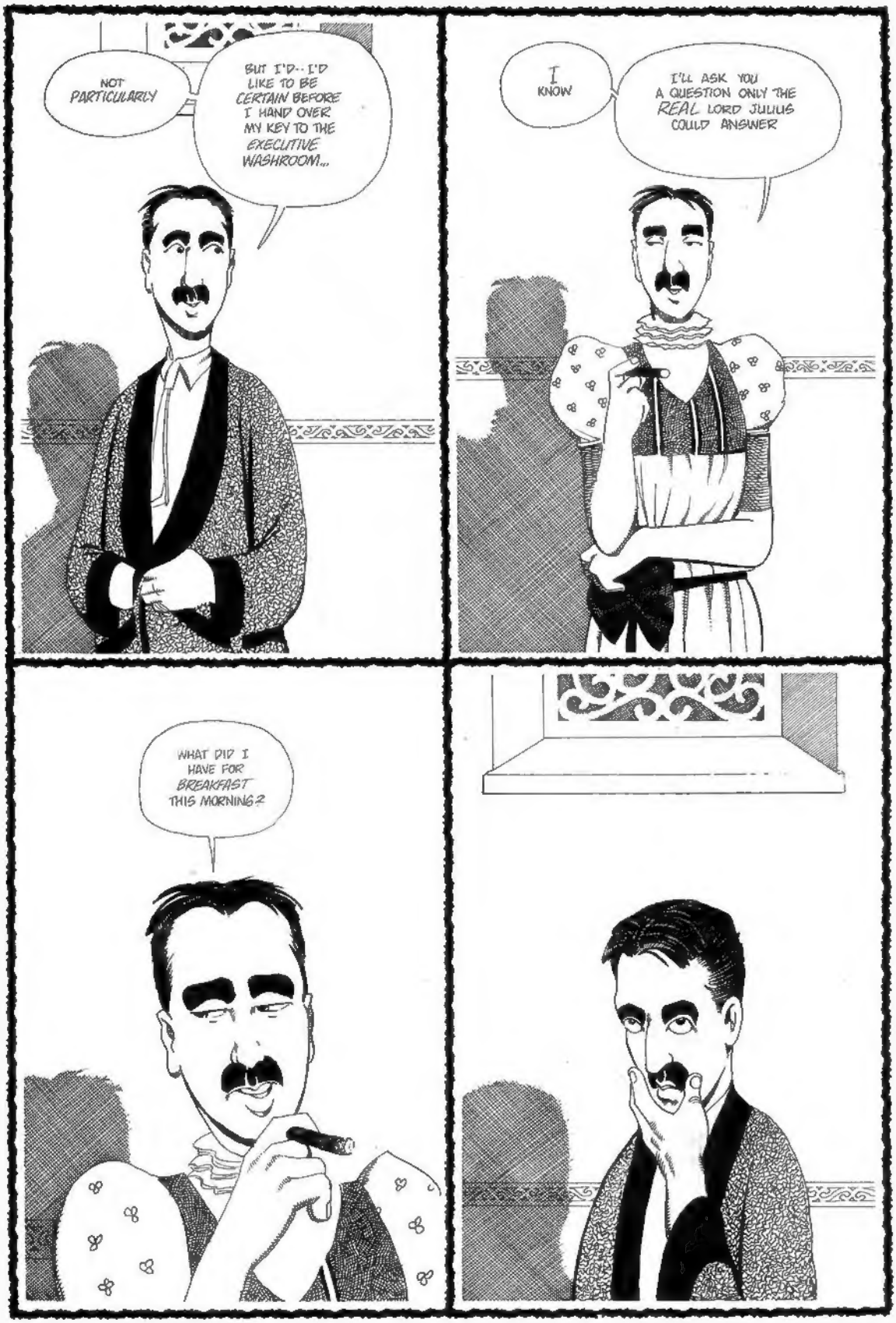
BASH

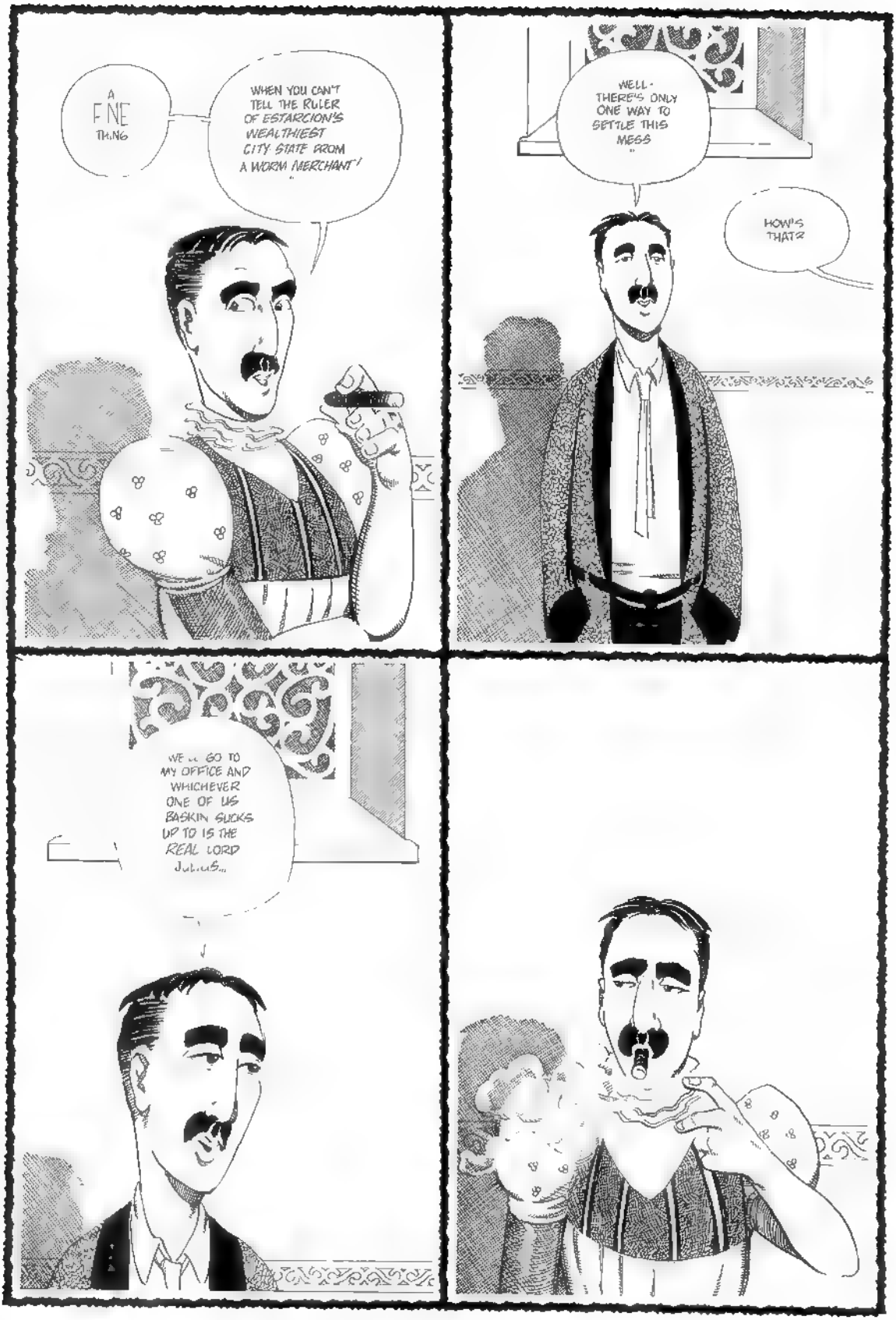

MORNING.
MORNING.

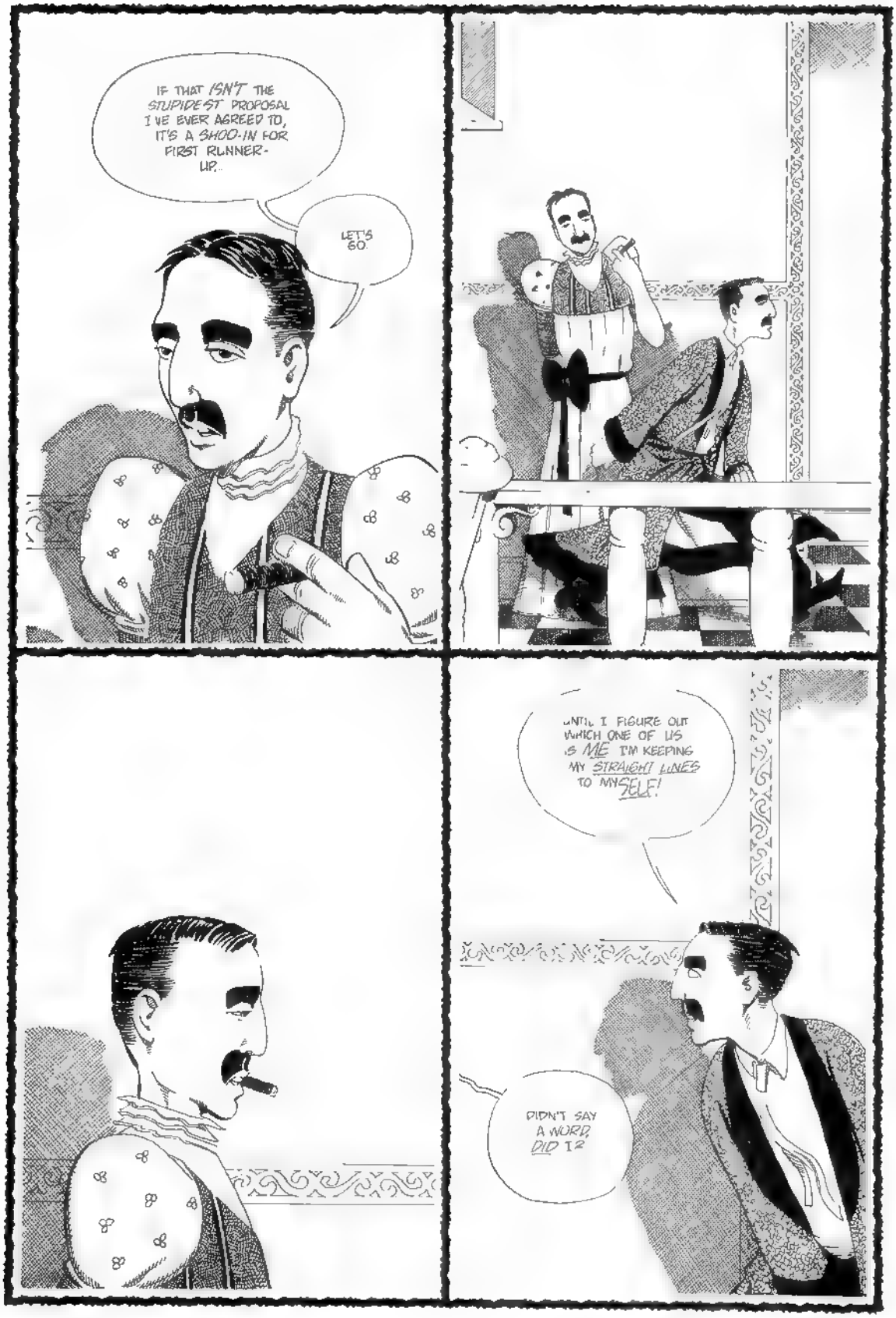

YOU KNOW IF IT WASN'T FOR THE FACT THAT I LOOK LOUSY IN CHIFFON I'D SWEAR YOU WERE ME...
IX-NAY ON THE ACKING-TAY
YOU LIKE-A-LOOKS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE SEEN AND NOT HEARD
LIKE-A-LOOK?
SEE HERE, MY GOOD FELLOW, DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

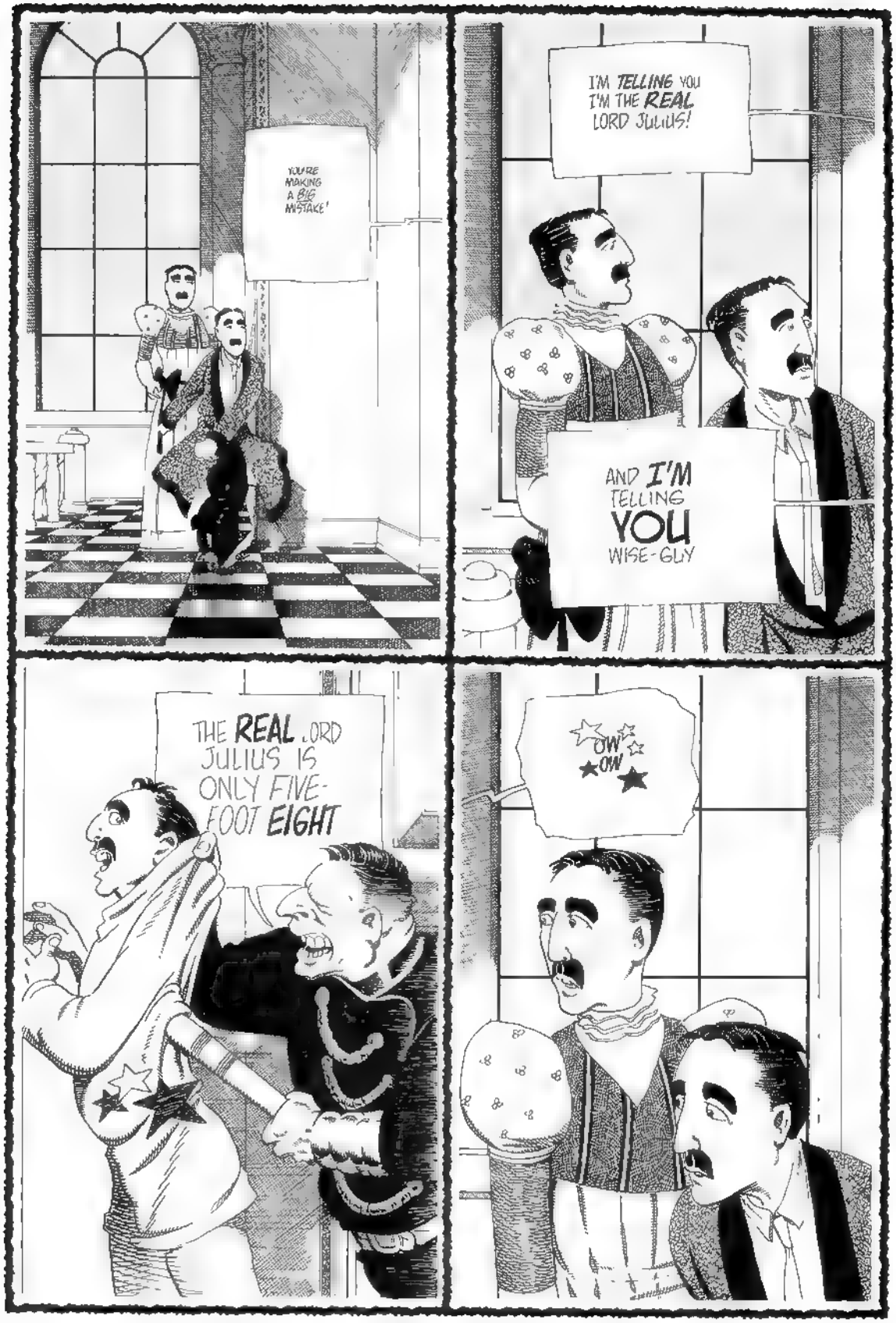
WELL. JUDGING BY THE SHOE SIZE AND COMPLETE LACK OF FASHION SENSE, I'D GUESS YOU'RE PROBABLY THE LIVE BAIT SALESMAN BASKIN FOUND AT THE FLEA MARKET IN PARMOC.
YOU MEAN I'M NOT LORD JULIUS?
SURPRISED?

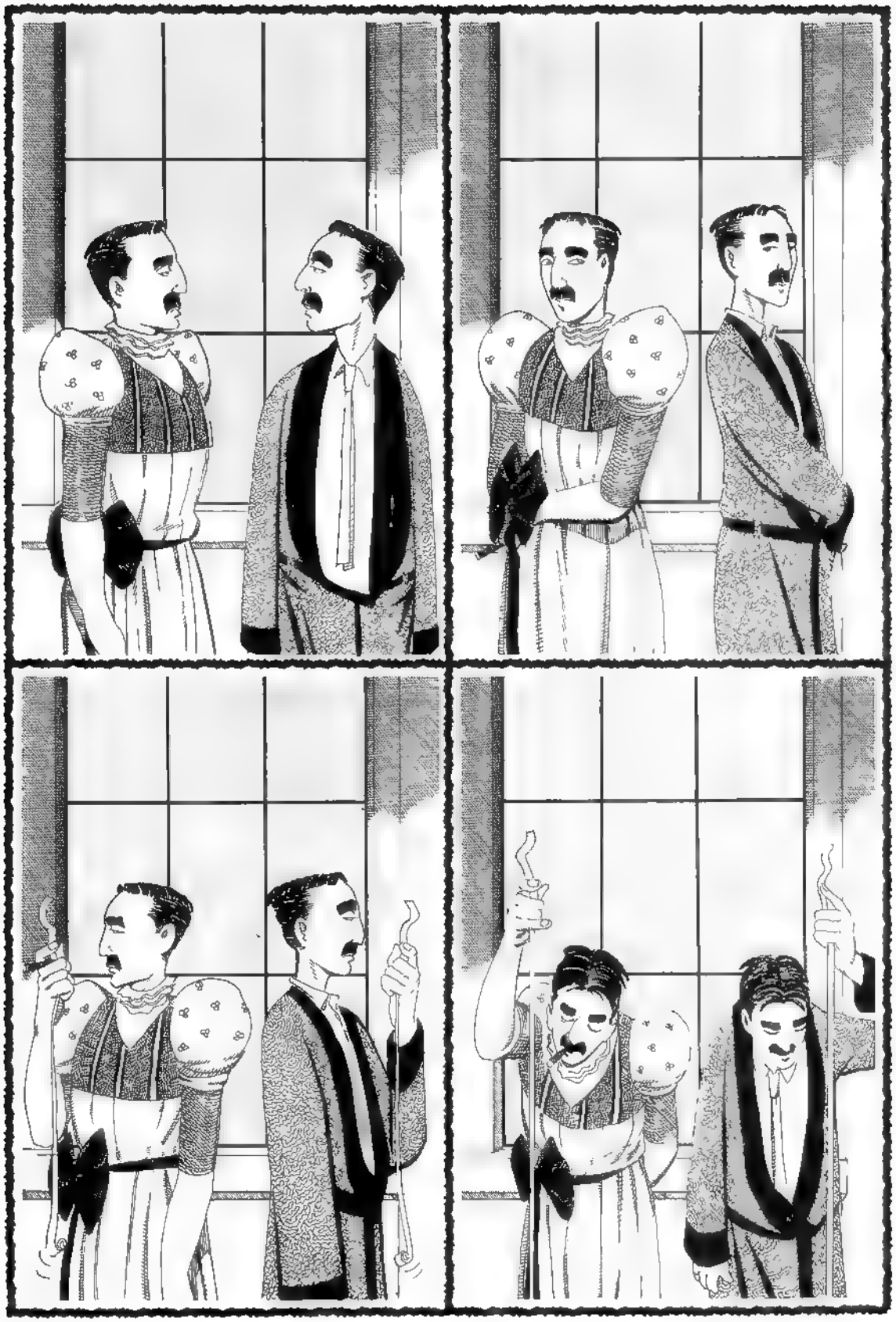

NOT PARTICULARLY
BUT I'D··I'D LIKE TO BE CERTAIN BEFORE I HAND OVER MY KEY TO THE EXECUTIVE WASHROOM...
I KNOW
I'LL ASK YOU A QUESTION ONLY THE REAL LORD JULIUS COULD ANSWER
WHAT DID I HAVE FOR BREAKFAST THIS MORNING?

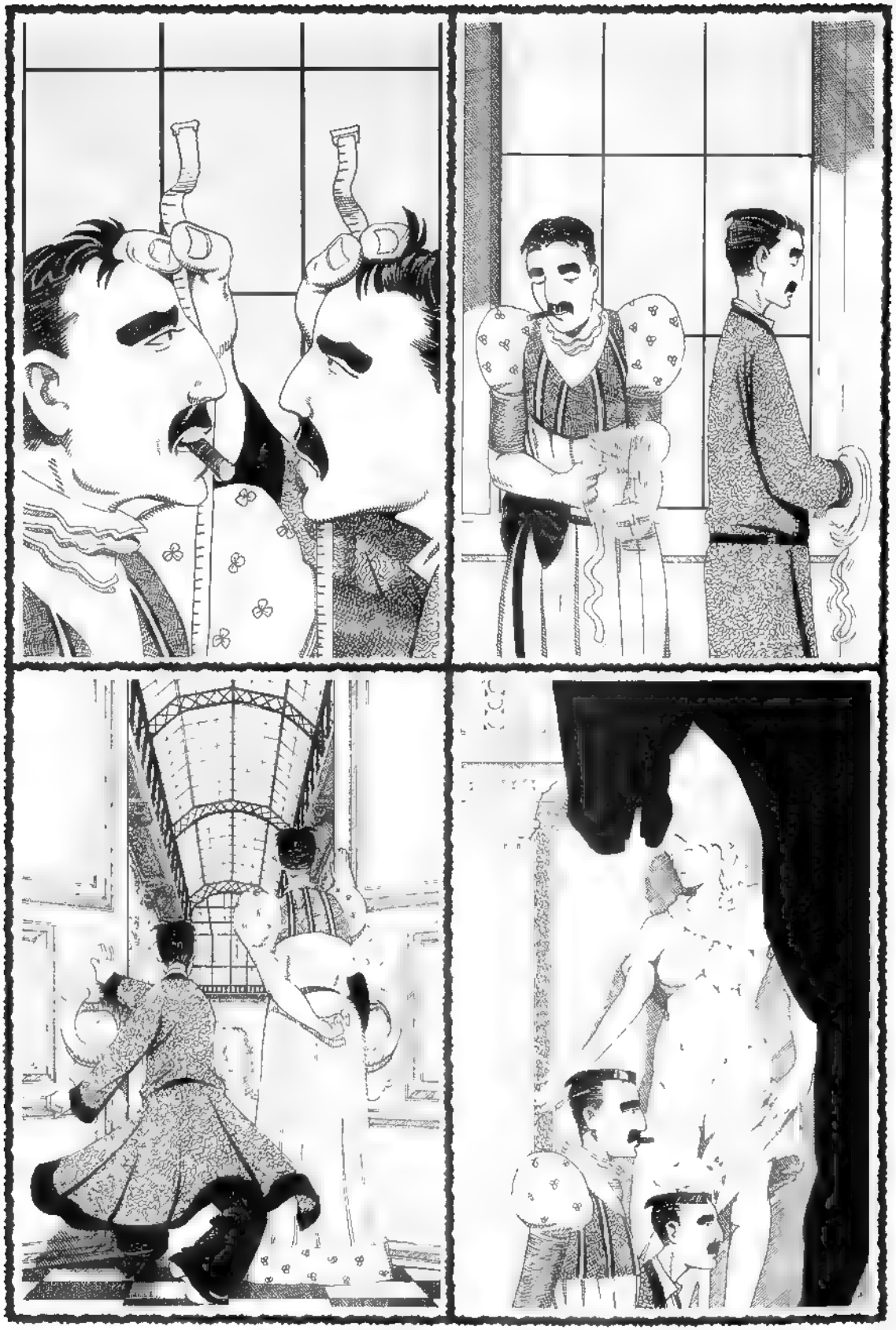
NOTHING! I NEVER EAT BREAKFAST!
WELL THAT'S THE ANSWER ALL RIGHT
SAY MAYBE YOU REALLY ARE LORD JULIUS.
AND I'M THE LIVE BAIT SALESMAN

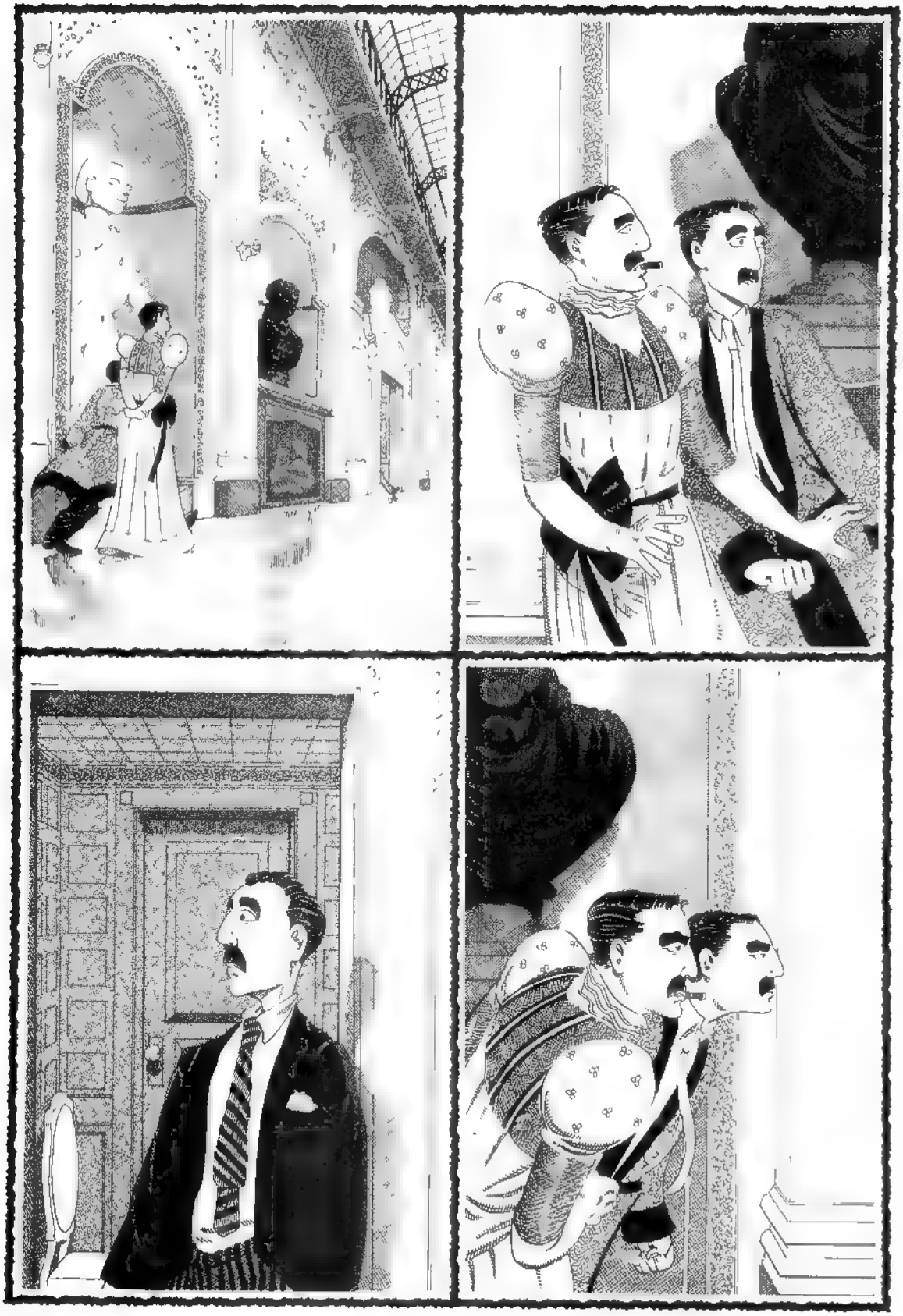

A FINE THING
WHEN YOU CAN'T TELL THE RULER OF ESTARCION'S WEALTHIEST CITY STATE FROM A WORM MERCHANT!
WELL- THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO SETTLE THIS MESS
HOW'S THAT?
WE... GO TO MY OFFICE AND WHICHEVER ONE OF US BASKIN SUCKS UP TO IS THE REAL LORD Jul..uS...

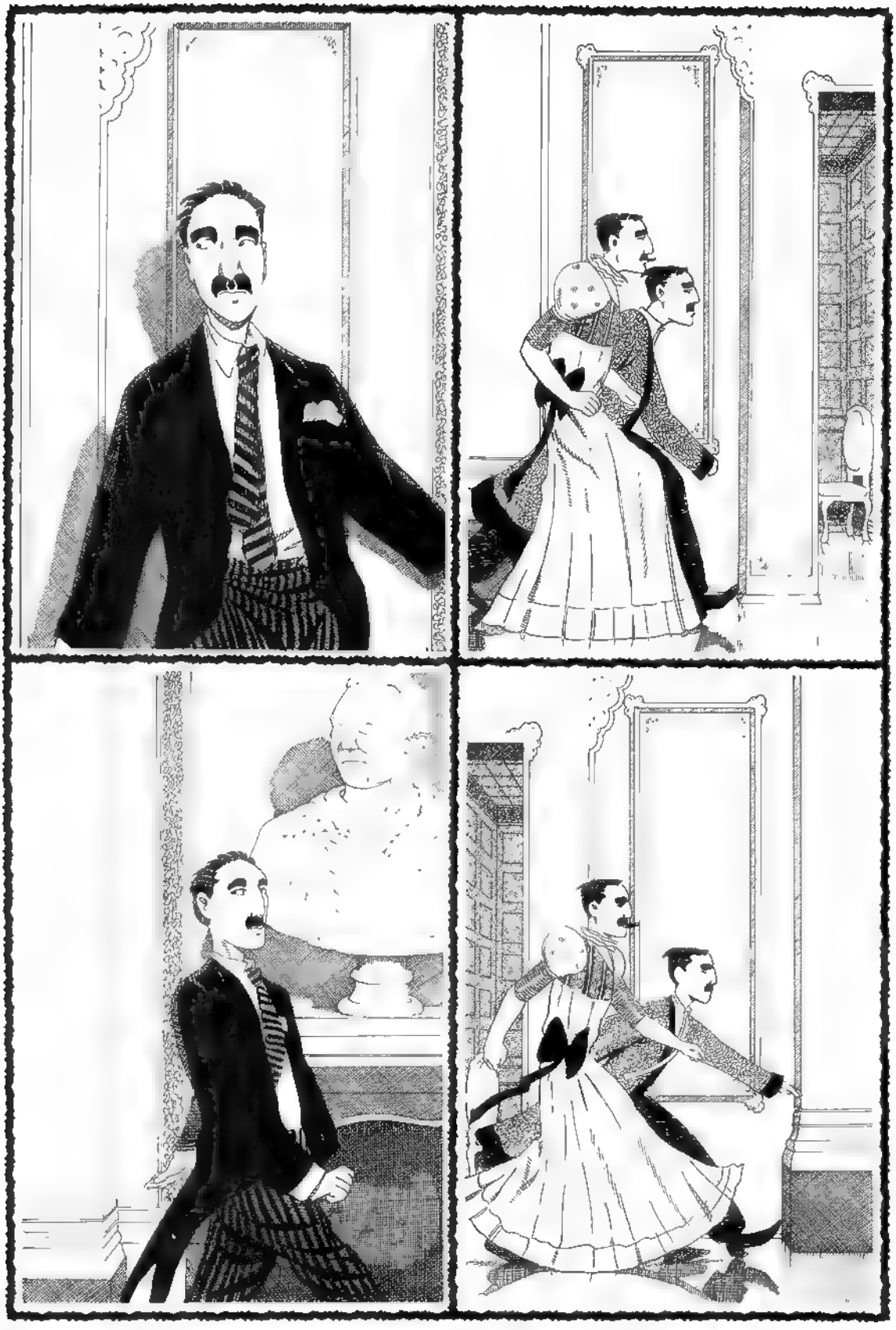

IF THAT ISN'T THE STUPIDEST PROPOSAL I'VE EVER AGREED TO, IT'S A SHOO-IN FOR FIRST RUNNER-UP...
LET'S GO.
UNTIL I FIGURE OUT WHICH ONE OF US IS ME I'M KEEPING MY STRAIGHT LINES TO MYSELF!
DIDN'T SAY A WORD, DID I?

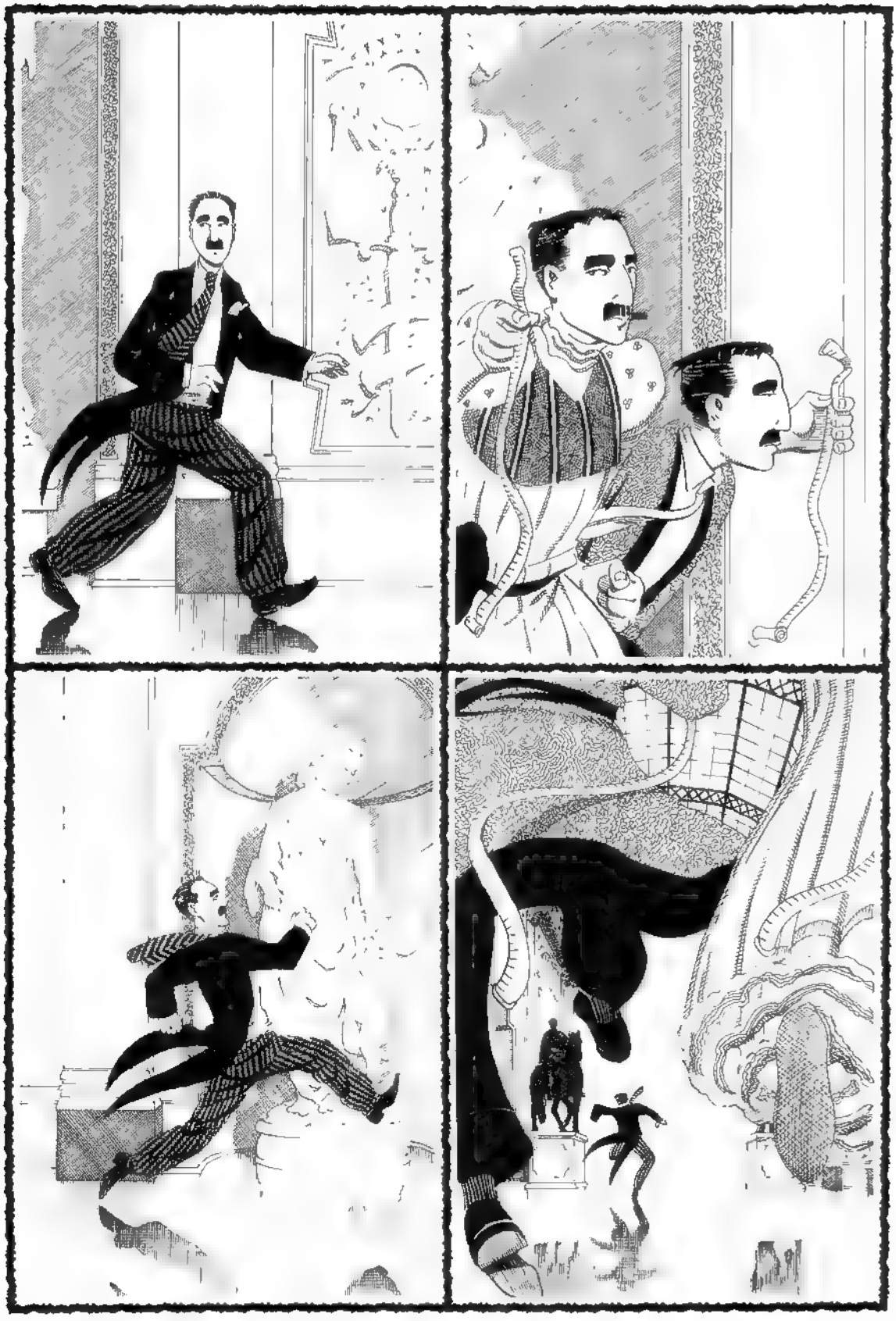

YOU'RE MAKING A BIG MISTAKE!
I'M TELLING YOU I'M THE REAL LORD JULIUS!
AND I'M TELLING YOU WISE-GUY
THE REAL LORD JULIUS IS ONLY FIVE-FOOT EIGHT
OW! OW!

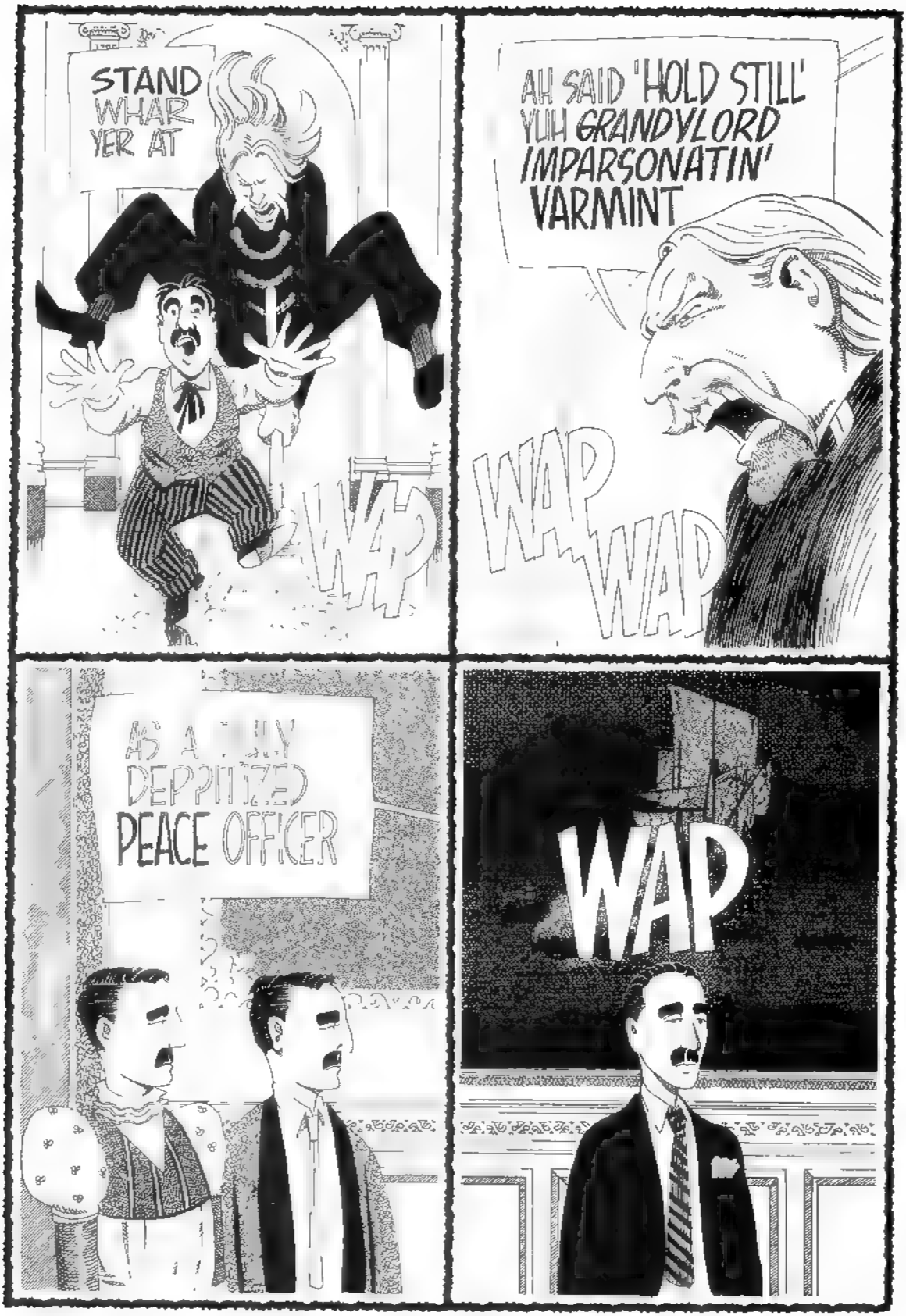


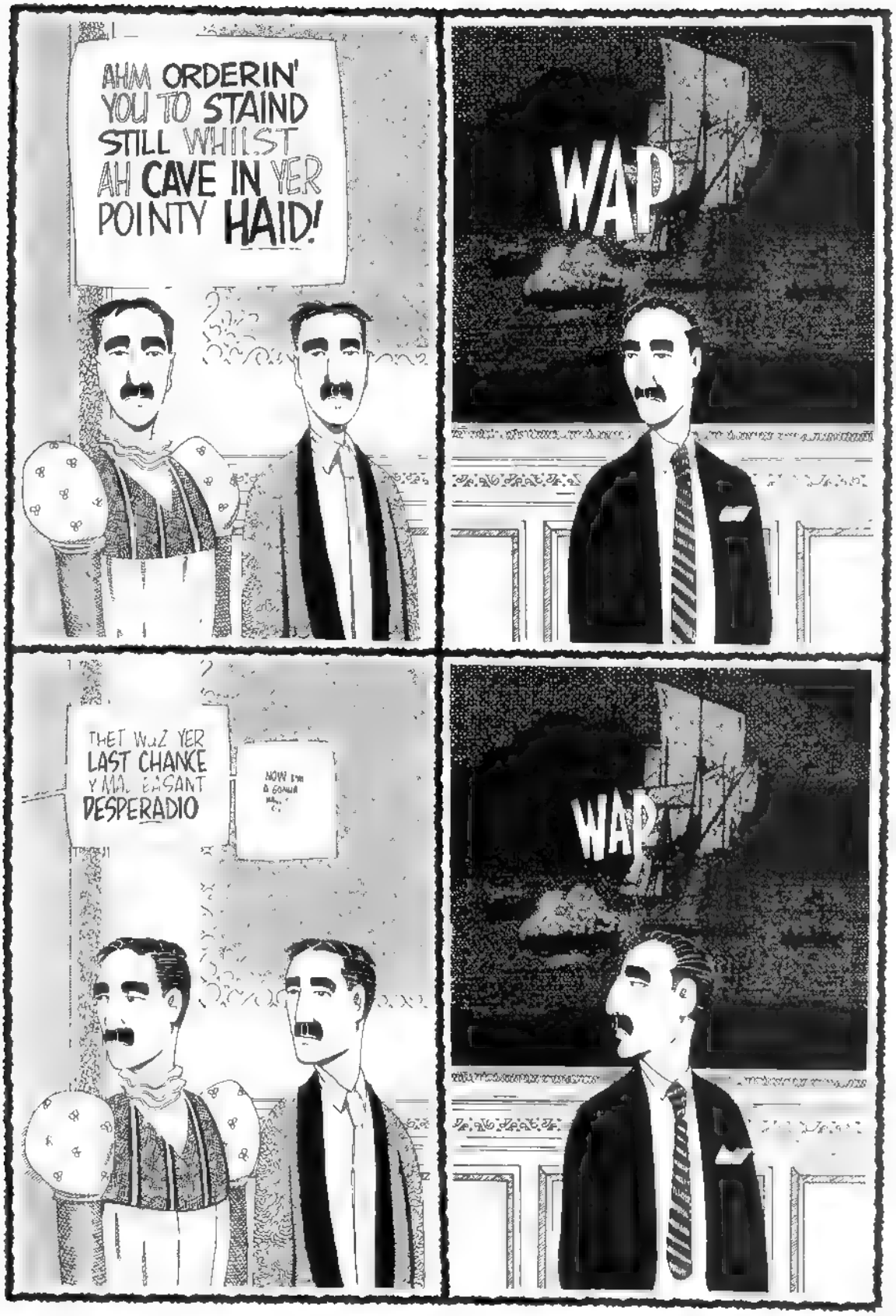


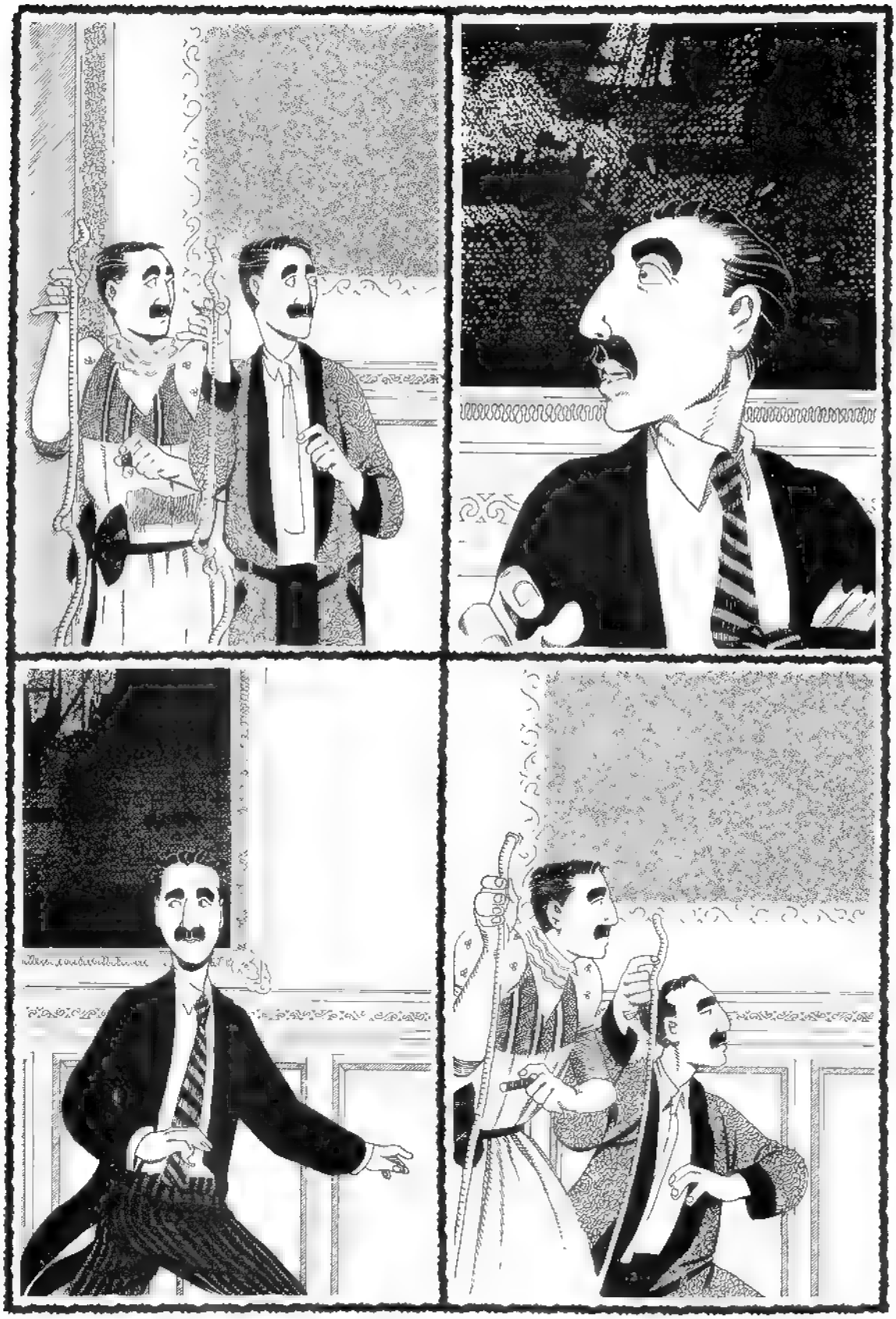







STAND WHAR YER AT
WAP
AH SAID 'HOLD STILL' YUH GRANDYLORD IMPARSONATIN' VARMINT
WAP WAP
DEPPITIZED PEACE OFFICER
WAP


AHM ORDERIN' YOU TO STAIND STILL WHILST AH CAVE IN YER POINTY HAID!
WAP
THET WUZ YER LAST CHANCE Y'MA. EASANT DESPERADIO
NOW I'm A GOAWIR MA...
WAP



*"Like-a-looks" concludes next issue.*

# AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dave,

Ah, Margaret Thatcher I should have anticipated her appearance. She epitomizes the paradox of the Cinnists: women who realize they stand on a higher plateau than men (it's true, women do), but then sacrifice what places them on that plateau, their femininity. Not that being totally 'fem' is good, but if everyone (got it, men? EVERYONE) exercised their femininity every so often the world would be quite a bit saner. Having yet to fathom what 'Mystery Achievement' alludes to, I think the Tears for Fears song 'Woman in Chains' would make a fitting alternate title to the last book of Jaka's Story The song deals with the loss of femininity and was largely inspired by ol' Maggie. Also, the song's title taken literally would simply state Jaka's incarceration

But what all this has to do with the subject of masturbation, I'll never know

Now that we clearly see Jaka's Nurse as a warm-blooded human being, it would have been cool if she was clearly illustrated just before she was executed Ah, well

Thanks for your response to my last letter It might have been radio-active because my eyes popped out when I found it in the mailbox Really, I appreciate it

Hey, keep it up I can't wait to see what's next.

'Til next time,

Brad Beaudet
52 Central St.
Franklin, NH
USA 03235

**********

Dear Dave and Gerhard,

Well, the end of another chapter in the *Cerebus* saga is quickly approaching. I have no idea how you will resolve the events in *Jaka's Story*, or if there will indeed *be* a resolution. But then, you wouldn't have it any other way, would you?

A hearty thanks to you, Dave, for your personal reply to my first letter You've got class, man.

Until the esteemable Mr. Nycacil becomes an optimist

Jeff Lilly
235 Shagbark Drive
Rochester Hills, MI
USA 48309

P.S. To Mike Canich - Congratulations on getting your single page published I am box #72 at Comix Corner in Rochester - drop me a line, will you? I haven't seen you since fifth grade!

**********

Dear Dave,

This is a letter from one of your few female fans. I just finished #134 - it took almost the same amount of time to read the letters column as it did the actual comic - don't get me wrong, this did not take away from the genius of your story I keep telling myself to stop reading the letters from sexually frustrated teenage boys whose girlfriends just gave them the ax but I always end up reading them anyway. Did you know that there is a band called Cerebus? It's some dark heavy metal group so I've heard, but Dave! they stole your name. I couldn't believe it - your creation, used by some band! It's one thing to write a song about our furry friend, but to name themselves after him? Soon General Motors will come out with its new Cerebus model for 1991, or we could have a 'Cerebus beer'! I know someone who bought this tape just because of the name.

Well, I sort of lost the purpose of my letter as most of your letters do. I did want to tell you that although I'm pretty much a newcomer to this, I am already in love with your work Besides #134, I also recently finished High Society and was very moved, especially by the last few pages featuring Elf and Cerebus. I'm anxiously awaiting Church & State I and II. Thanks for being born Dave.

Sincerely,

Renee Coppola

P.S. Just in case this is printed (hint, hint) Hi Beaver, Hi Kristen

**********

Dear Dave,

Hi. I'm sitting here at my rather boring summer job with a computer terminal and nothing in particular to do with it, so I thought I'd write a long overdue letter. Then I decided to write to you instead, because I never know what to say to my grandmother once I've gotten past "Thanks for the money" and "Sorry I haven't written for so long."

I've been with Cerebus for a long, long time now. I'm one of the loyal 20,000 and inordinately proud of that. I started with issue 37, caught up as far as I could with Swords, and have been with you ever since. Over that time I've graduated from high school, graduated from college (Duke), and am about to start graduate school in political science. When I started reading Cerebus I was a comic collector Now, I don't own a single comic book except my Cerebus run and the Alan Moore collection. That's it. You and Alan are the sole survivors, and when I walk into the comic store to check to see if any Cerebuses have come out in the last few months, I don't feel like I'm missing very much. I mean, the shit that is being put out now amazes me. Marvel publishes X-Men and their other hot titles twice a month over the summer, apparently, while that makes for a fast-moving storyline, and twice the sales, it doesn't speak very well for artistic credibility. Senseless violence and sex seem to be the only requirements for most books. I thumbed through Green Arrow and Black Orchid, for example, and, well, I wasn't impressed. Cerebus stands alone. When I look at all this other stuff, I'm embarassed that I ever used to like it. When I look back at Cerebus, though, it only looks better, fuller, and more impressive than I remembered it.

Oh, one thing. Thanks for putting out the bi-weekly. I never wanted to buy the "High Society" book because I already have most of it, but now I'm finally getting caught up. And the people who get mad at you for cashing in, for looking for a buck on this? Well, they're the same people who used to stand around at conventions with a smug look on their face, talking to some novice who had heard about Cerebus and wanted to start reading it, saying "Well, Dave Sim is notoriously unsympathetic to newcomers. If you weren't with us from the beginning, you'll never be able to understand what's going on. I wouldn't even bother trying if I were you." Wouldn't want people crashing their social club, you know.

I said above that I was doing graduate work in political science. Well, in my spare time I love to dabble in Estarcion political analysis, sometimes even comparing real and Cerebus politics for some killer analogies. My favourite comparison is Mikhail Gorbachev and Lord Julius, two talented but embattled leaders, who I see as having similar personalities and problems in a lot of respects (OK, not that close on the personalities, but I'm talking political tactics). You see, to my eyes there is a lot of Lord Julius in Mr. Gorbachev, and I try to get people to visualize Groucho in Duck Soup to get a grasp on that just as a starter. I mean, Gorbachev is a brilliant political tactician who stays one jump ahead of all of his opponents by being the only one looking that far ahead. I can see Mikhail dominating the people around him just like we're accustomed to seeing Julius dominate Palnu bureacracy, playing all the short sighted factions off against one another. Of course, now I'm starting to see the analogy fold back onto itself. Gorby is in all kinds of trouble politically because his country is broke, the subjugated republics want out, foreign policy (especially Europe) is kind of passing him by, and so on. Staying one jump ahead might not be enough for him anymore, because that next jump might turn into one hell of a leap; in other words, things might be spinning too far out of control for his pragmatism to handle. Well, Lord Julius is now faced with the crushing victory over lest by the Cirinists, who are by no means the pushover that the Iestan government of High Society was. What happens to the Palnu economy when Cirin refuses to recognize the debts of the deposed Iestan government? Palnu's main defense against her debtors defaulting was its control of the exchange rates, since it could destroy the currency of any nation which fell out of line. For the first time, however, Julius can't wield that kind of power, because Cerebus was nice enough to collect enough gold for Cirin's treasury that she can now go off the floating exchange rate and go back to the gold standard. Her army is also powerful enough to resist any mercenary army which Julius could raise and probably committed enough to not be bought off. Julius' domestic political power has always been based on the fact that pretty much everybody in Palnu was fairly wealthy, with their main concern being society and culture, the good life. If Cirin causes Palnu's economy to collapse, or even just to go into a recession, Julius could be facing the most serious threat to his power in his career, because the very foundations of his support would vanish. Gorbachev is in all kinds of trouble; I remember reading one analyst who said that the only thing keeping him in power is that there isn't anyone else who wants the job just now. Well, Julius is in trouble too, which he obviously realizes if he's running around in a dress, playing up to Cirin.

You may not buy the analogy, but at least there's food for thought. How many other comic books out there have created a world with enough complexity and substance to justify actually thinking about what's going on outside the immediate storyline? I think that's one of your greatest achievements in Cerebus: you have created a world that stands on its own, where the characters can grow and develop, where action can take place off camera, and where actions have repercussions.

Keep it up.

Yours,

Marc Lynch
P.O. Box 28073 CS
Durham, NC
USA 27708

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Cerebus readers,

Here I am bored out of my fucking skull at work and I just finished this month's Cerebus (134) and I thought, "Hey, why don't I pass some time and see if I can get my name in print" - a little highlight in an otherwise awful day (I'm a bit in the doghouse as I, after like eight years of being around computers, spilt some of my coke on the company's keyboard and now it behaves weird - thank the goddess it's not mine).

The 60's have managed, after years of ignoring them, to finally wriggle up my bum, and a letter in this auspicious book spurred me out of apathy to say something; to communicate with my fellow human beings; to break the cycle of alienation. "The Beatles were a mediocre talent at best. For the last 25 years, we, society, have been force-fed their dippy love songs and bland anthems until we're about to puke." Right on! The Beatles were the Paula Abdul of the 60's, and Paula's music is much better to dance to and her videos are more entertaining.

Get a fucking grip!!! The Beatles broke up years ago, John Lennon's DEAD, and Paul McCartney should be. The 60's are way over, and there are a great many people working to keep music alive, creating new variations and exploring new sounds. Support someone who is trying rather than supporting a bunch of rich old farts who have contributed nothing new musically in the past two decades.

Goddess, I'm glad I got that out. It needed to be said.

Hug, kisses and felches,

Mich
194 Hallam St.
Toronto, Ontario
N6H 1X5

P.S. Dave and Gerhard most awesome.

★★★★★★★★★★

DDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDAVE! . . . one of the famed last John Bonham's savage drum solos is currently blasting in my right ear - hold on, let me fix that - OK - now it's blasting in both ears. I thought about putting an early Cult disc in, but I remembered my sister's remark about them being trendy (which prompted visions of five idiots trying to dance and homosexuals in dreadlocks) so now I'm listening to Coda (which is not another name for Zepp's first LP, which a few of my friends believed (and probably still do), and I wasn't sure of until I bought the book *The Hammer of the Gods* (which, by the way, although loaded with cliches, is very, um, interesting, even if you don't like their music) and of course the disc, itself. Anyways, I hadn't read a comic-book, excuse me, a GRAPHIC NARRATIVE in a few months and the other day I found a message on my answering machine from one of the clerks - no, I need a better word, "clerk" reminds me of some Iranian named Muhammed supporting his family off his wages at Circle K - which come to think of it, kind of fits - anyways, this "guy" at the comic shop I used to go to left this message asking if I still shopped there so I stopped in today and after having my ass less-than-subtley kissed bought issues 124, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, and 133 and cancelled all of my orders for every other title except for "Fred's Life with a Dancer, her Husband, a Poetic Snob, and a Barkeep who Lusts after the Dancer". Cerebus is the only thing out there that is worth money. Well, my money, anyway. Uh, well, actually my parents' money.

I've always noticed that most people in a comic shop have some serious acne, usually wear glasses, and are quite weird or extremely quiet. The question is, do they read comics because they are shunned by their peers on account of having acne, wearing glasses, and being weird or quiet, or are their faces like a World War I battle field, their eyes bad, and their personalities other than "normal" because of their decision to read Niftyman rather than wash, of reading small text or lettering, and of avoiding social functions to read the latest comics?

Hey, why don't you do a five pager back-up after you're caught up and put everything that makes Cerebus great in

it and all of your followers will photocopy it and then pass it out to their friends (that's what I did with Wagner's *Hepcats* section - I hope he doesn't mind - and I hooked three people)? You won't make any money off of it right away, but by introducing new people to the character you'll get new readers and soon you'll be back up to your old circulation and possibly higher.

. . . my sister just offered to share her car over the summer and I screamed out "communist" and she left with a puzzled look. You know, come to think of it, The New Kids and The X-Men and all the other trends are merely slaves of capitalism. It's definitely getting late so I'm gonna go grab some Zapp's "craw-taters" (the best potato chips in the country), but before I go . . .

Margaret, I guess I fall into the "sexually frustrated teenaged white boy" category, but I also fall into the "philosophizing artist who experienced middle-age as an eighth grader in search of true love" category as well. . .

I will buy a Jaka phonebook, not for me, but a good friend (girl) . . .

Elf's still my favourite . . .

Chip
19622 Creekround Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA
USA 70818

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

In fact, what happened was Friedrich had become, at last, Dionysius. The term "insanity" is hopelessly inadequate, in fact condescending: certainly he had transcended social definitions of appropriateness, but these standards are designed to obliterate consciousness rather than nurture it. Friedrich danced past all mythologies' reason, causation, language, finally entering into a smiling world where consciousness itself was Bachanallian, orgiastic, scented with wine and sex. He hid his excrement in the bottom drawers of his dresser; they, too, were expressions of God, a part of his joyous, anarchic soul, and therefore worthy of reverence. Friedrich actualized poetry. Rather than clinging to the socialized function of art-as-alienation, he slipped between the cracks in the glass frame and disappeared. Friedrich knew the only worthy function of art was to incite the observer to destroy it, thus healing the false dichotomies of subject/object and reality/art. Only then would life be poetry. Only then, once abstracted moral notions were wisps of smoke between our teeth, would Being become an adventure re-created each day, with concepts like love, hate, compassion, violence, etc., continually at our disposal for use and revision as we saw fit. Only then would existence be a Bachanallian revel, dangerous, provisional, and lived.

And I, Fred Gwinne (Herman Munster of television's "The Munsters") am there.

(the scene: a small apartment in Germany The room is bare except for a dresser in one corner, a writing desk, overflowing with papers in the other, a small mattress and a chamber pot. Friedrich sits in a wooden chair, hands folded in lap, in room's center.)

F.G. So, I understand you recently had your first surfing lesson.

F.N. Yes, Fred, that's right. It was a real blast

F.G. Did you like Hawaii?

F.N. It was great. So warm there! I like the music: the steel drums, the ukulele . . . just lovely. And the wömen! Let-me-tell-you. Whew! (wipes brow in exaggerated gesture)

F.G Ha ha.

F N. I spent one wonderful evening on the beach, bonfires set in trash cans lighting the shoreline, the sea stretching back into the night, people walking arm in arm, the sounds of faint laughter and conversation mingling with the cool, rushing waves. I remember thinking: Well, this is it. It just doesn't get any better, you know?

F.G. Yeah, I know. Say, do you like peanut butter?

F N Ack! Fwoosh! Snorf! (bursts into flames)

F.G (as the flames consume him) OUCH!

F.G. OH ME OH MY!

F.N. (Friedrich's skin peels away to reveal a giant effigy of Mr. Potato Head, which rises from the chair, bathed in blue green flames, skyrockets through the ceiling and ascends into the heavens.)

WHHHOOOOOOOOOOHHHHHHH HHHHHHHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

Oh my God Oh sweet Jesus. I'm responsible for this. If only I hadn't asked him about peanut butter! But . . . what's the connection? Is there some relationship between Hawaii, Mr. Potato Head, peanut butter, and spontaneous human combustion? I must find out. I shall journey to Hawaii, and there, there will I find the answers I seek. I, Fred Gwinne, Herman Munster of tv's "The Munsters," shall journey alone into the heart of darkness!

With Ward Regards,

Fred Gwinne
Of Television's "The Munsters"
aka aka aka
1115 Sunlight From Cucumbers Lane
Germany, North Dakota

P.S. Like the recent issue (#16) Especially the part with the frog.

★★★★★★★★★★

Hi Dave and Gerhard!

I am a U S. Navy Serviceman stationed at RAF Edzell, a small Royal Air Force base on the east coast of Scotland halfway between Aberdeen and Dundee. Reading Cerebus gives me a great deal of enjoyment In particular Cerebus 129-132 and High Society 2-7 are the current reasons for this letter. Especially the change in mood starting in Cerebus 130.

I received those issues in the quarterly comics shipment I receive from a friend in San Diego (Greg Pharis of Golden State Comics). I only get a shipment once every 3 months because I buy only 4 titles a month - Cerebus and Will Eisner's The Spirit are the main titles I look forward to. The same day, I received the 1987 video The Masters of Comic Book Art which I also bought because you and Will Eisner were in it. Your comments on that video added to my enjoyment of Cerebus.

Although I was a Cerebus fan in the early 80's (issues 15-40 or so), I hadn't followed Cerebus (except for occasional issues) until your Cerebus Bi-Weekly reprints came out. After buying your reprints for a few months, I decided it was time to read the current Cerebus. After buying issue 122, it took me a few months to get into Jaka's Story, since I started with part 9. But I now enjoy it immensely. I particularly enjoy the contrast in reading the current Cerebus and then reading the reprints. While your earlier Cerebus issues had much more humour, your current Cerebus involves me much more deeply emotionally and intellectually. I much prefer the current quality and detail in your art and writing.

The Cerebus Jam from 1985 is a special favourite of mine, mainly due to the Cerebus/Spirit story. I idolize Will Eisner. His works are the only ones I have never ceased buying His "A Contract With God", "A Life Force", "Signal From Outer Space", and other works continually provide me years of enjoyment. As much as I enjoy his Spirit reprints, I enjoy his later, more mature works much more. Oh yea - this letter is supposed to be about you and Cerebus! Ha Ha. But I do compare you favorably with Will Eisner; you both give me a sense of QUALITY in your writing and art. It's more of a "feeling" than an intellectual comparison If you are ever able to do another Cerebus Jam, I would love to

see another Jam with Will Eisner, not necessarily the Spirit.

The only change in Cerebus I would like to see is in the covers of reprint series. I realize that the original covers are reduced to easily show that "this is the reprint". However, if the back covers are to continue being black, please consider reprinting the cover full size on the back. I realize the color printing costs might make this too expensive.

While I enjoy some comics, I have never cared for the inconvenience of handling the comics so that they will survive multiple readings. So I have ordered your Cerebus "telephone book" reprinting 1-25 and will try to come up with the money soon to order your other volumes. Thank you both for the enjoyment I get whenever I read Cerebus. I look forward to my next shipment of Cerebus and the next 14 years or so of Cerebus.

Peace, Live Long and Prosper

Jerry Edwards
NSGA P.O. Box 1024
FPO, NY
USA 09518-1100

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

It seems that you don't get the credit you deserve in the comics world. Cerebus is a wonderful creation and as much as they may be liked it hurts to see the TMNT making all that money. Give me an Aardvark any day

Anyway Jaka's Story #20, the last page Dave. Living in Merry Old England (with those so called soccer fans running about in Italy) the last thing I want to see is Mrs. Thatcher in your book.

Alan Moore makes the point in his preface to V for Vendetta that he might well leave the country.

I am seriously considering learning French at night school and heading in that direction in maybe 2-3 years.

Also Dave why am I a Gemini and not a Libra? Life would be a lot easier. Why I hear you all ask. Well because my girlfriend's exboyfriend was a Gemini and do I get compared or what? I am my own person and nothing to do with this star sign bullshit

Yours,

Ian Smith
18 Hart Rd
Wednesfield
Wolverhampton
WVII 3QJ
England

P.S. Did I need to talk to someone.

P.S. I love you Roshani.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Anybody,

Since Aardvark Comment has digressed to the point where WE the readers can discuss anything that WE want. I've a few things to say.

Dave Sim is not a god. He is a good artist and a great writer, but mortal just the same. Dave is also probably NOT an asshole. Judging from the notes from the president and the occasional response on the letter page he seems to be a pretty decent guy. It seems that the people who tell him to fuck off are the same people who whine when he refuses to do Cerebus sketches or sign entire collections for them as if he was their personal servant or something. How would any of you like to write your name a few hundred times for each adoring fan? One signature would make happy, an Elrod Bunny would make me ecstatic.

Complimenting the story/art/writing is important, but it does get boring. People be imaginative! I'd rather hear about other reader's lives/gripes/opinion/futile attempts at humour then the tripe printed in D.C.'s/Marvel's letter column where you got to kiss their editor's ass to get a letter printed. At least Dave is fair. If he wasn't, you wouldn't be reading this. What!? You're not reading this!? He didn't even print it!? Maybe he is an asshole.

Cassandra, could I borrow your little sister sometime?

Gerhard, how's your camera? It's been ages since I've heard from him. Is he well?

If the Canadian confederation breaks up, you guys would be welcome as a U.S. state. We'd treat you better than the Europeans (read English) who would just love to drag Canada into some infantile ego war with another prick European power. Do you really believe that European Nato would come to our aid (U.S & Canada) if we were attacked. Give me a break! Europeans are trouble makers. What was the last war Canada started? What was the last war Canadians died in? We North Americans need each other

Sincerely,

Casey (still can't think of some smart ass remark masquerading as a middle name) Bowser
P O Box 564
Brunswick, Maine
USA 04011

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

First off, this is the first time I've ever written you. So "hi!" Could you print this sometime in Jaka's Story? I'd appreciate it Please?

Anyway, I've got some steam I need to let off. I hope you don't mind.

I had to take a test today. Gods! I thought I was going to wack out before the time passed. And depending on the answer - well, anything is possible. It's just that my whole life came to a halt.

I'm talking about a pregnancy test. It's not a fate I'd wish on anyone.

I've been pregnant before. The first time was two years ago when I was 18. I didn't find out until I was 5-1/2 months along. I know - I know - wouldn't a missing period tip me off? Not really. When I was 15 - I was gang-raped by eight men. One of them was so drunk he couldn't get it up so he used a knife instead. I'll spare you the details but needless to say, I've been a mess ever since.

Anyway, with no support from a boyfriend of two years and risking the fact that I was going to fail my senior year in high school - I walked what was the only clear path for me because my life came first. I had an abortion. And surprise? Twins? That took eight hours out of my life. But I'm certain that it was one of the smartest things I've ever done. And I have no regret. But I have these thought to share. To have the option to terminate a life not yet born sounds more of a pro-life idea. There are times when even a planned pregnancy can spell disaster if carried out, due to some circumstances out of the parents' control. If, for some reason, the couple "split up" or they were never together. Which is most often the case cause the "man" skips out. So much for his words of true love. Most often the mother (mind you, I'm mostly referring to pregnant teens) doesn't have the means to provide. This is especially true if she can just scrape by on her own. When the "PRO-LIFERS" jump and scream about "Thou shall not kill" - and "Life starts at conception". Okay fine but where is all their concerns when the child is born? So now, with no father and no help from her family (which probably has disowned her) the woman has become another scapegoat of society that frowns down its long "moralistic" nose at her. Therefore having nothing to do with her. She can't work now because of the continuous attention she must give the newborn mistake. If she can't provide for her child it dies anyway - but if suffers this time! Or possibly she dies; then it dies too. Two deaths . . . neither by weapon - just society. The same society that forced her to follow through what she knew she couldn't control.

Or what if this woman was raped? Some say "Oh, that's different." But the results stay the same. It's a strange phenomenon of society. When a woman

gets pregnant - she becomes invisible.

And what of the child born from children? Imagine growing up with the feeling that you were a mistake! Believe me, in a heated argument - it'll just happen to "slip" out.

I terminated my pregnancy because I knew those little ones would suffer as well as myself. I consider that an act of love. An act that is so pro-life, that I stand pro-choice. Now, I'm 20. I had a miscarriage four months ago. I was also told I can't have any children because of what happened when I was attacked. I was also told that I may have AIDS from one of those drunken bastards. But I keep trying because to have live birth would be such a nice change for me. I'd be such a good mother.

It makes me blister with hot wrath when God-worshippers start to preach at me. My question is if "God supposedly loves me so much - why didn't He pull those slobbering bastards off me?" Where the hell was "He" while my screams were being choked in my own blood? How does the song go? "I don't want to start any blasphemous rumours but I think that "God" has a sick sense of humour. And when I die - I expect to find him laughing." People tell me that I'm going to burn in hell 'cause of my doubts. My lack of trust in "God". Well, surprise you narrow-minded fucks - I don't believe in hell either! And this is not directed to you, Dave or any of your readers. Anyway, it just seems like people are screaming to hear themselves yell. I know there are realistic thinkers out there - they're just getting harder to find these days. Speak louder!

Well, I'm sure I've managed to piss someone off. And I'm sorry too, but I don't believe in "God". It's that simple. And as for "Satan"? "He" and "God" are the same thing to me. No one is perfect. I mean, if "God" created us in "his" own image - then his flaws are obvious. Too many to mention.
That's all. Sorry for it being such a long letter but I had to say something! Best of life to you all. Thanks for hearing me out Dave.

Blessed be,

The Ranger
Eureka, CA

P.S. In case anyone was curious - the test results were negative. (Sigh) I guess Fate has cast the dice and I'm to walk the road of life alone.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave:

This will be short and sweet, like Dan Quayle's dick.

I don't envy you the chore of sifting through your fan mail. You have some confused motherfuckers sending you shit. Cassandra the Witch is a cunt. Obviously, anyone who would refer to herself as "Cassandra the Witch" is a pretentious clit-spanking wanker (and I mean "wanker" in the time-honoured derogatory sense).

I don't want to hear about anyone's wimmin problems, so all you lonely hearts out there just shove it. Life sucks, okay? Deal with it. And why do people feel a need to share with the world the latest alternative hip college radio spineless post-modern pandering bullshit artist bands they happen to be listening to? No need to prove that you're too cool to groove to Phil Collins' latest; you all don't impress me anyway.

Now Dave. I was just flipping through old issues of "Church & State". Mine all Mine, etc. You crazy motherfucker, you stuck your financial neck out the way you shot your mouth off sometimes. Now Church & State was wonderful, and it had teeth. It fucking bit you, man. Now much as I adore Jaka's Story and at the risk of a) assessing a work-in-progress and b) taking issue with the Master, I must stress that Jaka's Story has no such teeth. This is merely a transitory novel, I understand, and there are 160 + sets of 20 to go before this epic is concluded, but my concern is that too much high rollin' has made you soft, Dave. So what's the deal man, have you lost your edge? Let's kick some ass! Spit venom in the faces of the cowering masses, just as I know you can!

Yours in gratitude,

Andrew Davis
Summit, NJ

P.S. Anal fisting rocks. It's up there with spreading scat as my most pleasurable erotic pastime.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I was sitting around the other day wondering why you'd never answered my questions, so I looked up my letter to you of May 2 (actually written April 30) and realized I hadn't asked you any! The questions were in a letter I wrote April 23 which I intended to type (it was *so* sloppy) and have since lost.

Oh well.

Have you ever read a translation of *Gilgamesh*? John Gardner and John Maier's is the best, though it appears stern and forbidding at first, with its massive critical apparatus (what that means is that there's more than text: a *lot* more). I think you'd like it. If you've read another translation, you should be warned that several versions were written over a thousand years or so, that none of them are in good shape, and that until recently translators tended to put together bits and pieces from lots of different versions, so you may not have read anything like sin-leqi-unnini's so-called "canonical" version.

I've read and reread the *Gardner/Maier* book enough to highly recommend it - not to everybody, but to you. You're not only educated enough to handle it (self-education is the only real kind), but I think you'll find that the poem matches your own . . . philosophy isn't exactly the word I want, but it's close enough.

Just in case you don't know anything about Gilgamesh, here goes:

The Gilgamesh texts were first discovered in the late nineteenth century, and what fascinated everyone at first was the depiction of the Biblical Flood in texts far older than any extant copies of Genesis - indeed, older than the composition of the Bible, it turns out. Further study into Babylonian and Sumerian literature makes it clear that both the Bible and Gilgamesh "borrowed" their account of the Flood from another text called Atrahosis, which also provided the basis for the Biblical story of Creation (the reason God keeps talking to himself - and even arguing with himself - in Genesis is that the ancient Hebrews were adapting stories in which 4 Gods - or 3 gods and a goddess, actually - were doing the creating and destroying).

After 50 years of focusing on the Flood story, we are just beginning to see the real core of Gilgamesh is something quite different. The story, in simple form, is this: Gilgamesh was a great King, who oppressed his people in some way (scholars disagree on interpretations of exactly how), so that they called out to the Gods for deliverance. The Gods responded by making Enkidu, the wild-man-of-the-woods, the primal man, untouched by civilization, who would be mighty enough to be Gilgamesh's equal. The two meet, and fight, and become fast friends. Together they slay the demon Humbaba, guardian of the Cedar forest. Innana (Ishtar, the Great Goddess; Terim, if you will) offers herself as wife to Gilgamesh, but he rejects her, and in revenge she has Ann the Sky-God send down the Bull of Heaven (remember the Conan Story the Bull of Ana? this is where it came from) to ravage the city. But Gilgamesh and Enkidu defeat and slay the Bull, and eat it, and Enkida throws the thigh bone at Innana.

This desecration cannot be allowed, and the gods decide that one of them must die. It probably should be Gilgamesh, as instigator, but he's needed as king so they decide to kill Enkida instead.

This moment, the exact midpoint of the poem, is that crux. Everything from beginning to end, turns on Enkidu's death. For Gilgamesh is left devastated. Grief, emptyness, despair, fear for his own life, having seen his friend struck down in his prime, all of these mingle in a horror which drives him to madness. He rends his clothes, becomes the "wild man" Enkidu had been, and abandons his kingdom to search for his legendary ancestor, *Utnapishtim* ("He-Who-Found-Life"), said to be immortal and dwelling somewhere in hidden places beyond the end of the world.

Well, he finds Utnapishtim, who is, indeed, immortal, but when Gilgamesh asks his secret, Utnapishtim reveals his other name, Atrahasis ("Over-Wise" - I like to translate it as "smart-aleck"), immediately familiar to sin-leqi-unnini's readers and soon revealed in the text as the Babylonian Noah. Basically, he says "Well, kid, I saved humanity from the flood Enlil brought down on us, and when the Gods regretted their act and discovered me, they rewarded me with immortality. But that's been done. Who's going to make *you* immortal? and for what?"

Gilgamesh returns a sadder but wiser king, and brings the account of the first days with him: the poet implicitly attributes the epic "Atrahasis" to Gilgamesh as poet, and proclaims in the very beginning that, great as his accomplishments as king were, this one was the greatest:

> The one who saw the abyss I will make the land know; of him who knew all, let me tell the whole story . . . in the same way . . .
> <as> the lord of wisdom, he who knew everything,
> Gilgamesh,
> who saw things secret, opened the place hidden, and carried back word of the time before the
> Flood -
> he travelled the road, exhausted, in pain, and cut his works into a stone tablet.

Then there's the twelfth tablet. Contradicting much of what has gone before, Enkidu is alive at the beginning and dies a quite different death, going down into the underworld to bring back Gilgamesh's *pukku* and *maru* - objects of some scholarly argument, but usually translated as "drum" and "beater". Disregarding Gilgamesh's instructions on how to dress and behave in the land of the dead, "the earth seized him." Gilgamesh goes to several Gods weeping and begging for help in bringing Enkidu back, and finally Ea - the same God who helped Utnapishtim in the main story - takes pity on him and arranges for him to have a conversation with Enkidu's ghost. Most of this is a catalog of what the afterlife is like for men who have died in various circumstances. For a slightly different version of Tablet XII previously published in a scholarly journal, Gardner wrote the following conclusion "The tablet is now half in ruin; much of what it says had fallen into the cracks of time. All we know for sure is that it's good to have sons, probably bad to fall from the mast of a ship into nothingness, good to die quickly and painlessly, good to die in battle, bad to die in the wilderness, unnoticed, and unspeakably bad to die unloved. Mainly what we know is that to die at all is a terrible thing, but to die without having truly lived - without having loved and left loved ones - is to be garbage surviving through eternity on garbage."

There is no doubt whatsoever that the twelfth tablet belongs with the first eleven - a colophon at the end of the sixth column of Tablet XI gives the catchline for XII, 1; while another at the end of XII, VI indicates the series is complete in twelve tablets. If you thought the end of XI was a downer - Gilgamesh returning empty-handed from his failed quest for immortality - the ending to XII makes that seem light-hearted, for the poem ends with the fate of "the one whose spirit has no one left alive to love him." "the left-overs of the pot, the scraps of bread thrown into the gutter (what no dead dog will eat) he eats."

Alone, unloved, and unmourned. Do you know what you're *doing* to the poor gray guy?

An interesting footnote here is that by the time sin-leqi-unninni (that's the correct spelling, by the way, I have the book in my lap, now) wrote his version (some thousand years or more after the historical Gilgamesh dies), Gilgamesh had been turned into a minor deity and was worshipped as a strict-but-merciful judge of the dead who lived on the moon and was a sort of patron saint looking out for the interest of those who- you guessed it- died alone, unloved, and unmourned.

Dave, you've *got* to read this. If you haven't already, I mean. If you have, I've just wasted a lot of paper, but what the hell.

One final thing. In the center of the poem, which Gardner and Maier think (rightly, I believe) is the most important part, when Enkidu is dying, Gilgamesh promises to keep his name alive, that not only will the city mourn him, but "those who have not yet exalted" his name shall do so, and they both spoke earlier of immortality through fame (their motive for seeking out Humbaba). Gilgamesh lived 2000-2500 B.C., and this story was popular, in one version or another, into the Christian era to about 500 AD, has been rediscovered and is popular again. Moreover, its themes have been present even when the text was "lost" - Sir Gawain's Green Knight and Tarzan are two examples of Enkidu-figures that are not taken from the poem, but are part of a tradition that goes back, eventually, to the cuneiform texts pressed into clay or carved in stone between the Tigris and Euphrates. Gilgamesh lived not long after the invention of writing, and he became the first poet at least partly in order to keep his friend alive through poetry for all time.

So far, he's done a pretty good job.

I still have questions, but I spent lots more time and paper on Gilgamesh than I intended to, so I'll save them for another letter.

Steve Bolhafner
3659-A Meramec
St. Louis, MO
USA 63116

P.S. I don't remember if I told you that I bought Ellmann's biography because of your "recommendation" (primarily, your Oscar himself). Thank you, thank you, thank you. Great book. Also see better a lot of your in jokes (not just *any* modern picture on the wall, but Whistler's fucking *mother*!! Oscar would *love* that), which is sort of why I bought it, but even without that, it's a great book. Consider this letter my way of returning the favor.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave-

On my word processor, the little dot that I use to pull things around on the screen I keep hidden in the middle of the 'turn off' box in the upper right hand corner. Don't know why exactly . . .

Anyhow, this letter is about drugs.

I decided to write to you after I read about your attempts to quit smoking pot; I read that and I started thinking about it, and for some reason my thoughts finally came clear. Or clearer at least. (You see, I've pondered the subject many times before now). And I thought that your letters page was an especially good place to dump insight since nobody has to worry about minding the swollen toes of society's taboos when they talk.

So to start with, the main thing that I could never figure my way around was the stereotype which hangs upon all people who use marijuana. Perhaps this is due to the fact that I was brought up in a real 'bread and jam' kind of family,

by ideal parents with ideal values. And perhaps it is partly because I was a wimp/loner in grade school and left behind when kids started experimenting with the 'forbidden' things like sex and alcohol and all that sort of stuff. (I think partly that this was due to my having been respected and treated right to Dr. Spock's letter while being brought up. I talked with and trusted my parents to the point where I reflected the attitudes of the 'sensible' adult world around other kids my age. So naturally they didn't like to hand around me. Weird, huh? — You bring up a kid 'right' and you still manage to screw him up . . .)

But anyway, I have this overwhelming tendency to simply consider all people who use any form of narcotic to be lost causes and generally worthless excuses for human life. And while this often appears to be the case (though it is never made clear if it is the person or the environment which decides whether or not a state of worthlessness is to be achieved, and made even less clear when looking at the workings of our society what exactly it means to be 'worthless'), I am nevertheless confounded whenever I see or meet or read the work of highly intelligent and creative people who use drugs. (Not to mention the fact that I consider alcohol to be a drug. I spend a lot of time wandering around in bewilderment).

Now, I'm not so stuck up as to point at your trying to quit marijuana and then cry out that your intelligent side is winning out over your less intelligent side, or whatever other bullshit meaning could be woven into your actions by observers. That sort of thinking is achieved only by those with the most static minds who, for whatever reason, fight their own psychological growth until they blossom into full grown hypocrites and then proceed to rot.

I don't want my brain to rot. It would slide out my ears and be foul . . .

So I focused my thoughts on the subject and examined things from a 'big picture' perspective, and all that sort of stuff for a while and I came up with this.

The Universe is not a nice place to be.

It's hard and it's cold and it's unforgiving. But don't get me wrong: the Universe isn't a bad place to be either. Basically, it is just a place to be. Short and simple. Good and bad are relative terms, and they are relative to how you happen to be feeling. But the Universe . . . (that's Universe with a capital 'yoo') is a constant.

Let me explain.

Until you really think about it, you will hardly ever realize just how out of touch humans, (humans with a small 'aitch') actually are with the real world. Rather than seeing the world for what it is, people see instead the illusions they project upon that world. Humans are driven almost entirely by their imaginations. Everything we perceive in our world, all the constant and neutral things which surround us, we coat with a layer of illusionary goodness or badness before we let any of it enter our heads. Very simply, if we are depressed, the world looks ugly, and if we are happy it looks good.

The guy who wrote that letter a few months back which described how sex was driven by fantasy and imagination and that there was little difference between real male-female sex and masturbation, was bang on. Where you are, in fact, fucking a bag of slippery pizza coloured organs supported on a calcium based set of scaffolding, you think that you are actually fucking a sexy guy or girl.

Though the scope I'm talking about here is much wider than simple reproduction.

It applies to absolutely everything.

And so, we are all essentially emotional live wires living in a world where the reality of the situation is that each human comes together out of the lego blocks of the Universe, lives for a minuscule spark of time, and then crumbles back into pieces. Love and beauty and ugliness are nothing. That stuff is just software. Just a bunch of bullshit illusions. And because we are human, this sort of thing sucks shit to think about. This is why the unexamined life is so much easier to live. This is why the fool wandering lost in lego-land is the lucky one . . .

But putting all the sentimental stuff aside, it is also how I explain drugs.

The police define a narcotic as a substance which alters the state of the mind. So since all the things we see around us come into our minds and affect the way we feel, logically every damn thing within someone's sensory range is a drug.

Every rock and every tree and every rainy day is a mind-altering stimulant. Sports, and movies and television and care and bloody well everything people do in recreation are drugs. Paintings and books are all attempts by humans to put pure emotion and feeling and ideas into forms which can be understood and experienced by other humans; all the great artists and writers were drug pushers.

So why then should I give in to the feelings associated with the grass sucking stereotype? Why should I feel any contempt or hatred for the roach smoker, when I, by comparison am a virtual crack user when it comes to printed media and cinema and the like? Hell, the only difference between the two forms of mental stimulation is that one is based upon altering the brain's chemical state with substances engineered outside the body as opposed to chemicals engineered within human glands. You can be as straight as a priest, but we are all drug addicts until the end. (Actually, if you consider that religion is just a particularly thick illusion of magic and beauty which hangs across all the hard and sharp aspects of real humanity, then priests are ten times worse than any drug lord . . .)

So, anyhow, I suppose when the bricks stop falling, it all comes down to simple personal questions which will vary with the individual. (That's individual with a very small 'eye' indeed, but I only had the one on the keyboard to use . . .) People must balance these things out on their own. People are going to take drugs to feel good anyway so that the question just lies between which you choose; the powerful, instant highs of marijuana, cocaine and booze and the dangers associated with these and all the other fabricated narcotics. Or the safe but relative impotency of . . .

No . . . of all things about men and women, the emotions are certainly the last to be counted among the impotent . . . It is better rather to say the uncontrolability of those drugs which are fabricated by the glands within the skull.

So in summing this whole thing up, I suppose Dave, that if you manage to kick the pot, so to speak, you will be in the best situation of all. Already you need marijuana far less than most people. (Putting aside the problems of dependency). And this is for the simple reason that you can brew up your own safe drugs within the pages of Cerebus and earn your living by doing so. Legally. (When I say 'safe drugs', I'm obviously ignoring the fact that love and hate have killed off a whole bunch more people than substance abuse ever will).

Anyhow, that's more or less what I wrote to you to say.

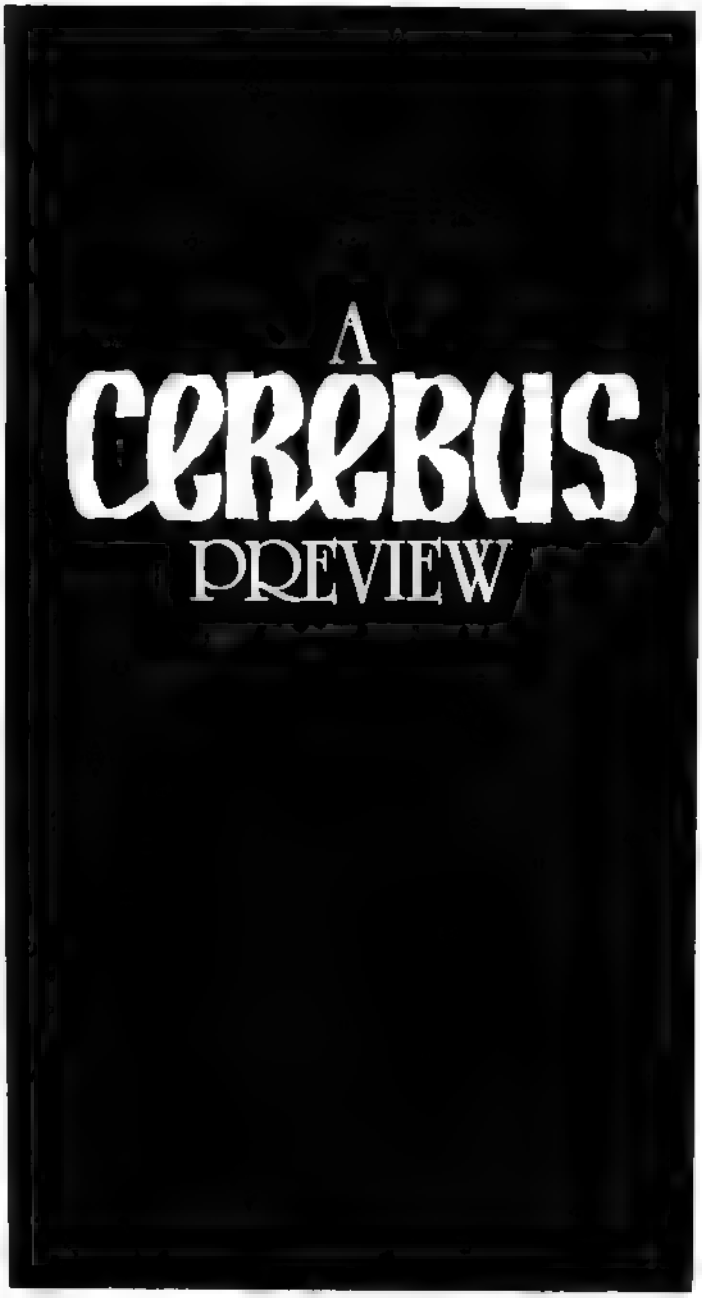
Yours introspectively,

M'Oak

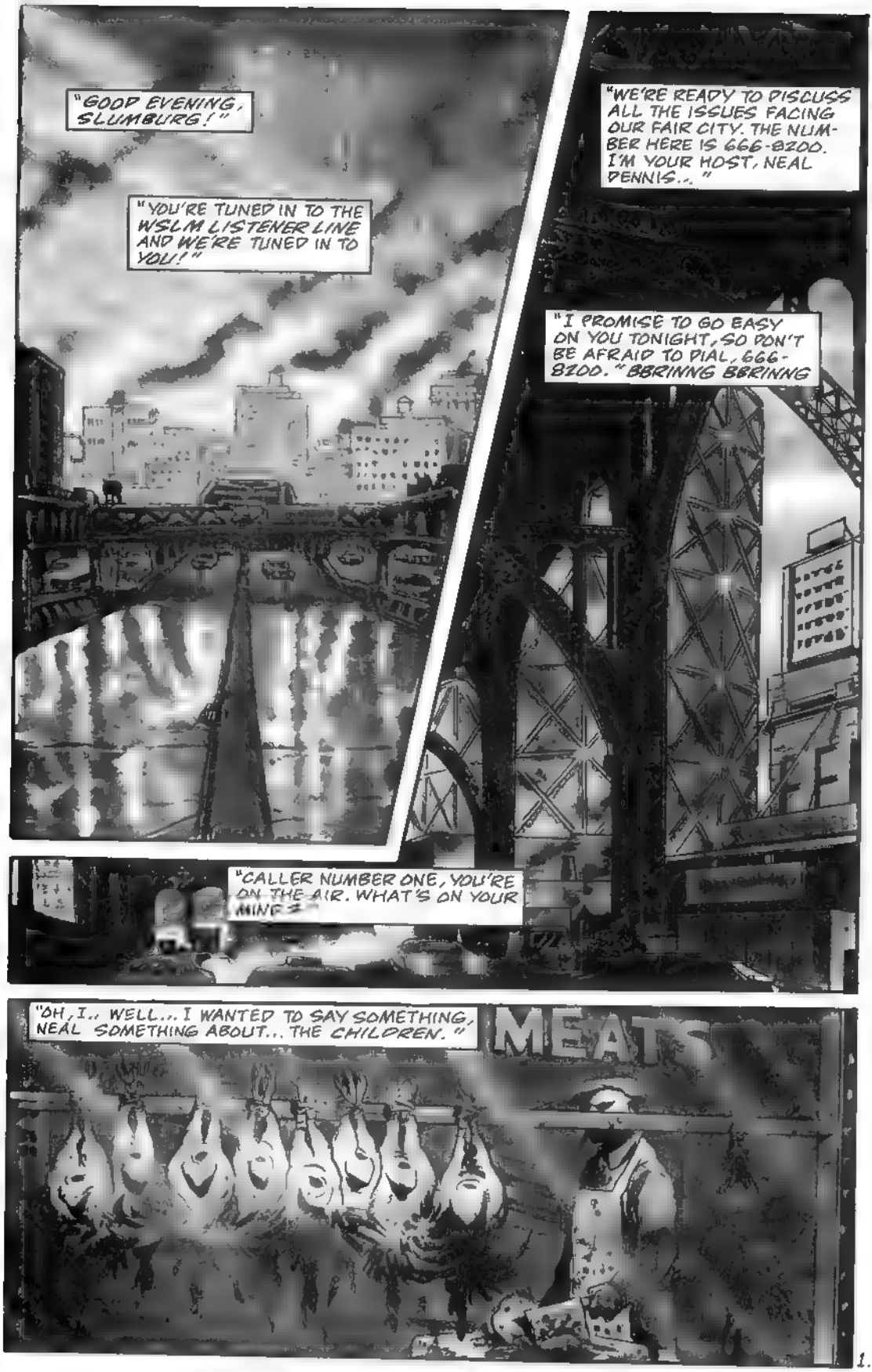
P.S. You draw the best Thatcher I've seen.

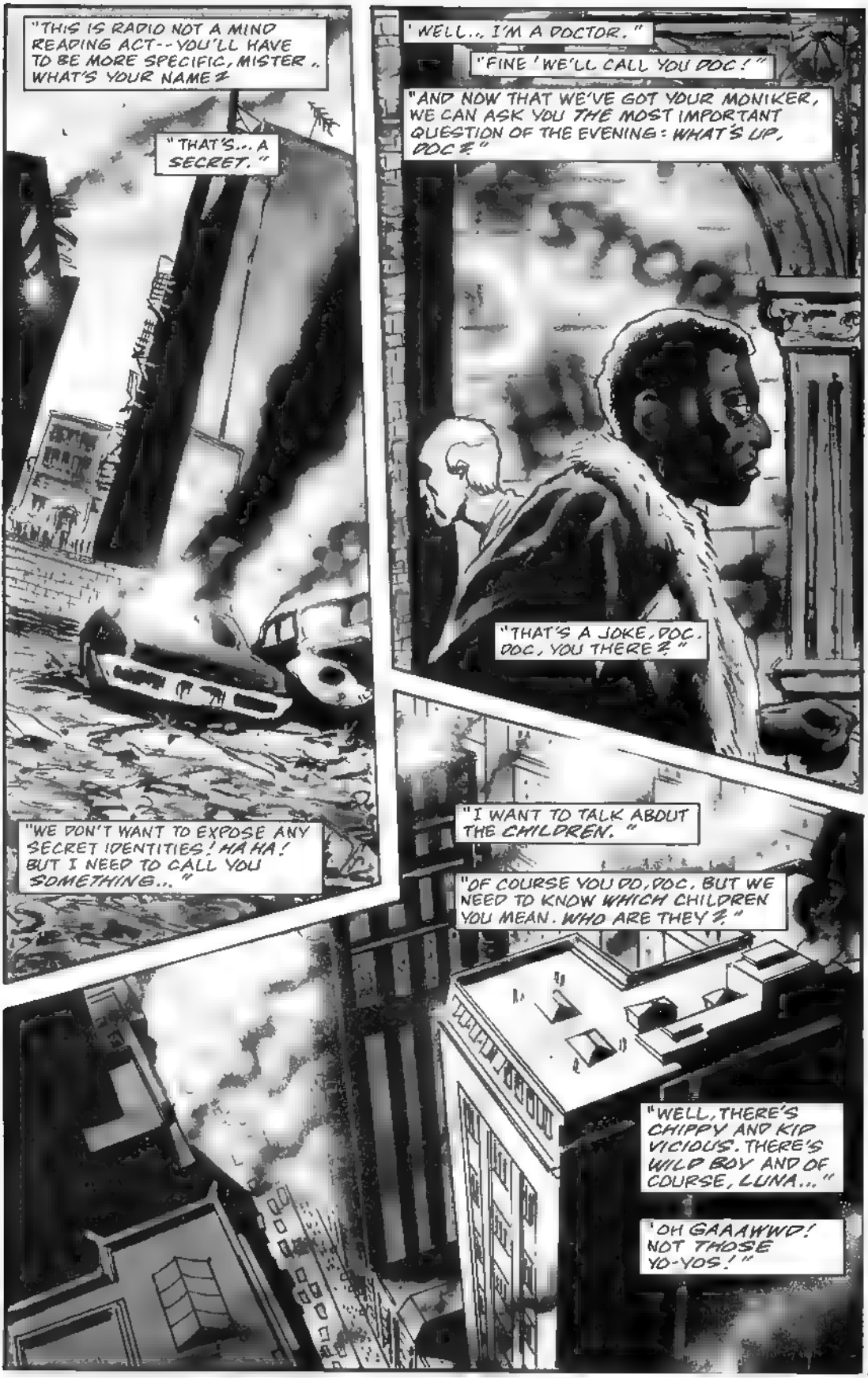
★★★★★★★★★★

# A CEREBUS PREVIEW



**I was naturally a little leery of the idea of previewing *Bratpack* since it does appear (on the surface) to be a traditional super-hero story. When the negatives came in from Northampton, Mass. I decided to see if I'd made a mistake or not. By the time I got to page four I was chuckling out loud. "Wait'll they get a load of this" to paraphrase Jack Nicholson. Rick Veitch has long-term plans for *King Hell* that stretch out over a decade or more. *Bratpack* is the first of these inter-connecting projects.**


"GOOD EVENING, SLUMBURG!"
"YOU'RE TUNED IN TO THE WSLM LISTENER LINE AND WE'RE TUNED IN TO YOU!"
"WE'RE READY TO DISCUSS ALL THE ISSUES FACING OUR FAIR CITY. THE NUMBER HERE IS 666-8200. I'M YOUR HOST, NEAL DENNIS..."
"I PROMISE TO GO EASY ON YOU TONIGHT, SO DON'T BE AFRAID TO DIAL, 666-8200." BBRINNG BBRINNG
"CALLER NUMBER ONE, YOU'RE ON THE AIR. WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?"
"OH, I.. WELL... I WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING, NEAL SOMETHING ABOUT... THE CHILDREN."
MEATS


"THIS IS RADIO NOT A MIND READING ACT--YOU'LL HAVE TO BE MORE SPECIFIC, MISTER. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
"THAT'S... A SECRET."
"WE DON'T WANT TO EXPOSE ANY SECRET IDENTITIES! HA HA! BUT I NEED TO CALL YOU SOMETHING..."
"WELL... I'M A DOCTOR."
"FINE! WE'LL CALL YOU DOC!"
"AND NOW THAT WE'VE GOT YOUR MONIKER, WE CAN ASK YOU THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION OF THE EVENING: WHAT'S UP, DOC?"
"THAT'S A JOKE, DOC. DOC, YOU THERE?"
"I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE CHILDREN."
"OF COURSE YOU DO, DOC. BUT WE NEED TO KNOW WHICH CHILDREN YOU MEAN. WHO ARE THEY?"
"WELL, THERE'S CHIPPY AND KID VICIOUS. THERE'S WILD BOY AND OF COURSE, LUNA..."
"OH GAAAWWD! NOT THOSE YO-YOS!"

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# Church State

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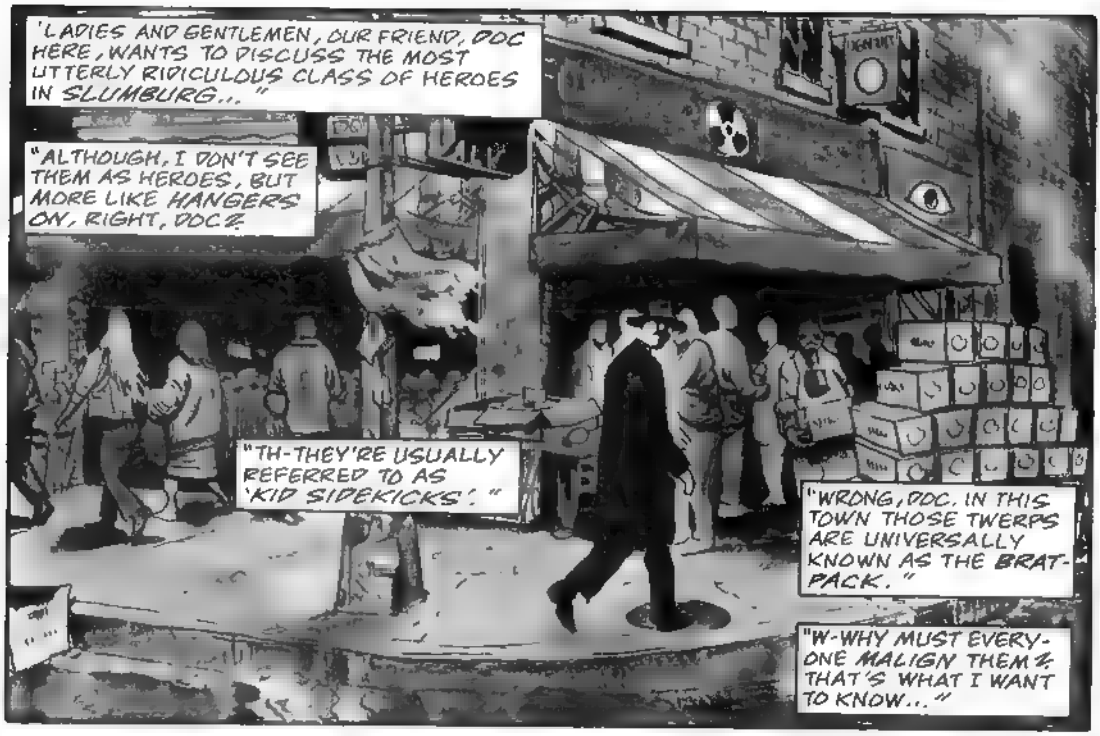
'LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, OUR FRIEND, DOC HERE, WANTS TO DISCUSS THE MOST UTTERLY RIDICULOUS CLASS OF HEROES IN SLUMBURG..."
"ALTHOUGH, I DON'T SEE THEM AS HEROES, BUT MORE LIKE HANGERS ON, RIGHT, DOC?"
"TH-THEY'RE USUALLY REFERRED TO AS 'KID SIDEKICKS'."
"WRONG, DOC. IN THIS TOWN THOSE TWERPS ARE UNIVERSALLY KNOWN AS THE BRAT-PACK."
"W-WHY MUST EVERY-ONE MALIGN THEM? THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW..."

"BECAUSE THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF ADOLESCENTS DRESSING UP AND FIGHTING CRIME WITH THE LIKES OF THE MIDNIGHT MINK OR JUDGE JURY IS PREPOSTEROUS!"
"UNDER THOSE MASKS THEY'RE JUST KIDS!"
'THEY'RE AN EMBARRASMENT, DOC. IN FACT I BET A MAJORITY OF THE CITIZENS OF SLUMBURG WOULD LIKE TO SEE EVERY ONE OF THEM BLOWN TO KINGDOM COME!"
"DON'T SAY THAT! IT ISN'T TRUE!"
"WELCOME TO THE MAGIC OF RADIO, DOC. WE'RE GONNA PROVE IT'S TRUE BY PUTTING IT TO A VOTE!"

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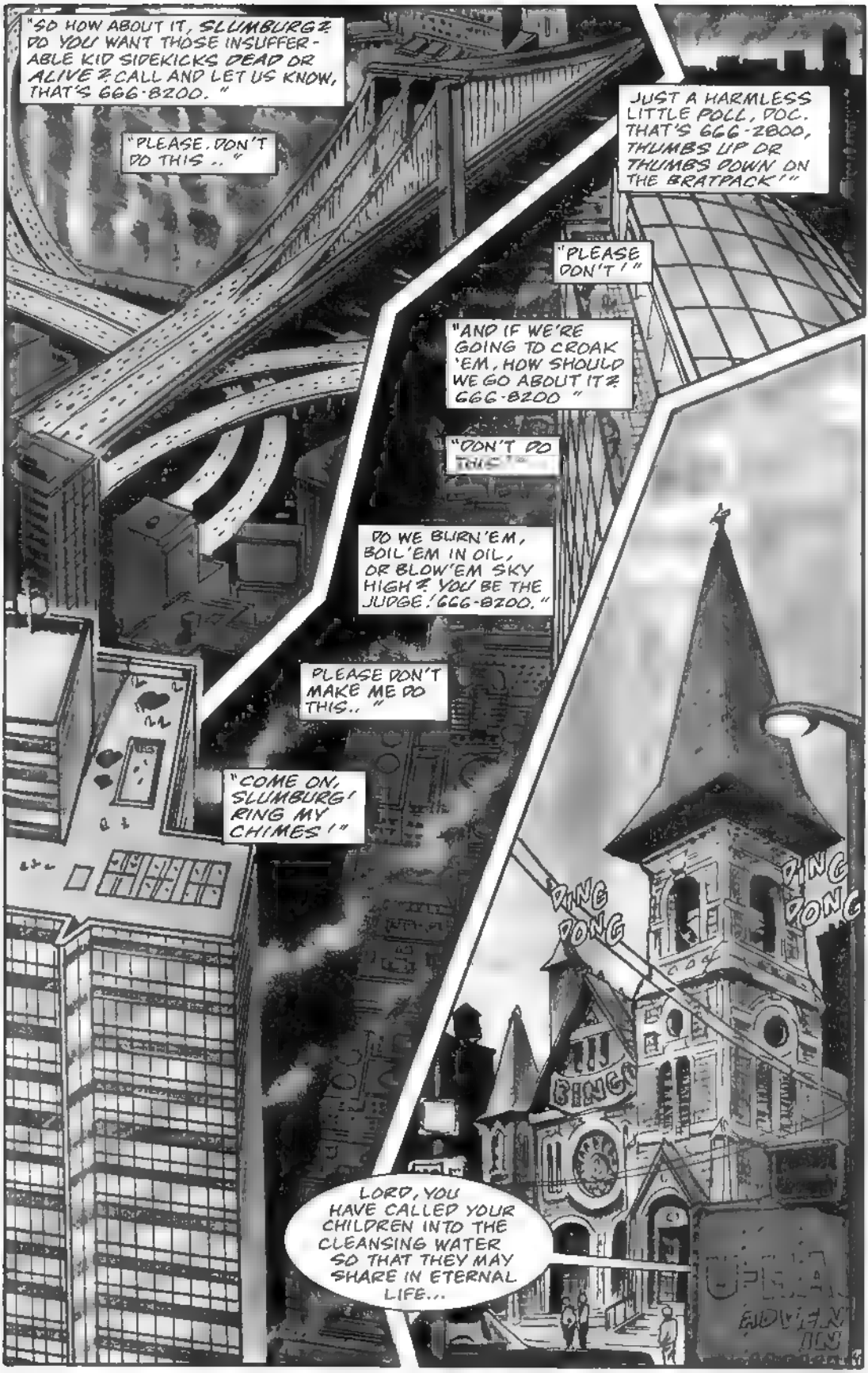
DAVE SIM
Church & State


"SO HOW ABOUT IT, SLUMBURG? DO YOU WANT THOSE INSUFFERABLE KID SIDEKICKS DEAD OR ALIVE? CALL AND LET US KNOW, THAT'S 666-8200."
"PLEASE, DON'T DO THIS.."
JUST A HARMLESS LITTLE POLL, DOC. THAT'S 666-2800, THUMBS UP OR THUMBS DOWN ON THE BRATPACK!"
"PLEASE DON'T!"
"AND IF WE'RE GOING TO CROAK 'EM, HOW SHOULD WE GO ABOUT IT? 666-8200"
"DON'T DO THIS!"
DO WE BURN 'EM, BOIL 'EM IN OIL, OR BLOW 'EM SKY HIGH? YOU BE THE JUDGE! 666-8200."
PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS.."
"COME ON, SLUMBURG! RING MY CHIMES!"
DING DONG
DING DONG
BINGO
LORD, YOU HAVE CALLED YOUR CHILDREN INTO THE CLEANSING WATER SO THAT THEY MAY SHARE IN ETERNAL LIFE...

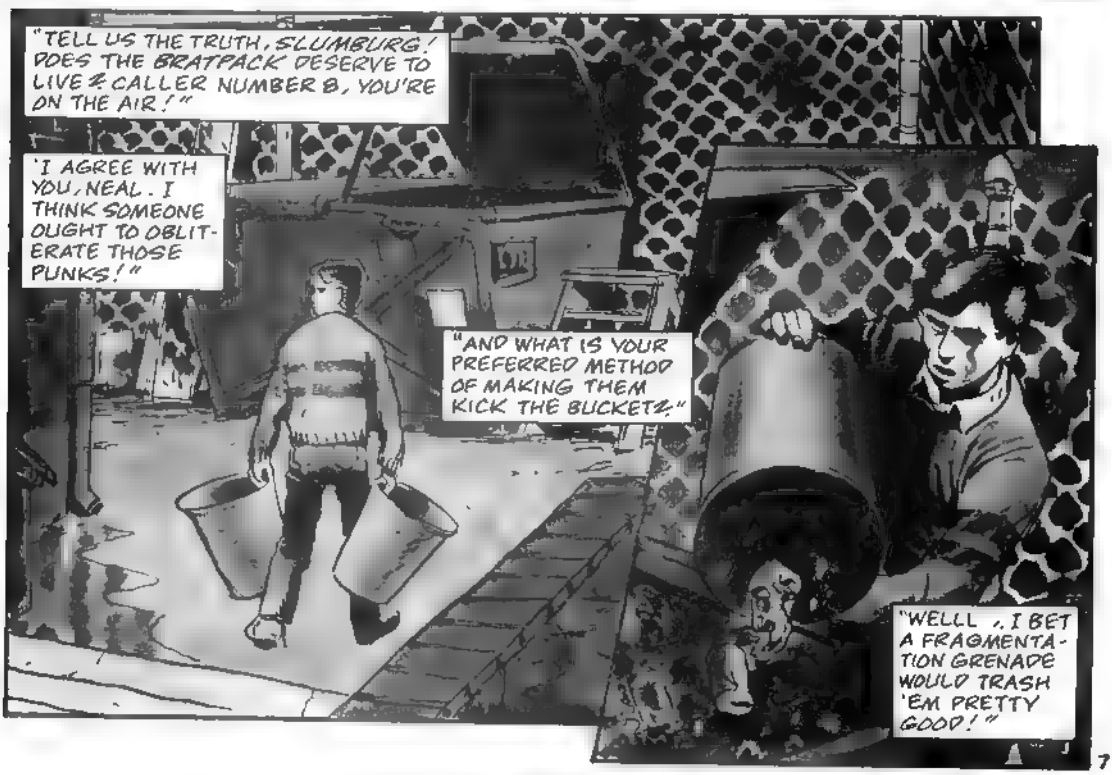
LORD, WE ASK THAT YOU SET THIS CHILD FREE OF ORIGINAL SIN AND THAT HE BE RESCUED FROM THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS
LET HIM BE A TEMPLE TO YOUR GLORY AND MAY THE HOLY SPIRIT DWELL WITHIN HIM.
AAA-ENGH! AAA-ENNGGH!
I BAPTIZE YOU IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.
GOD IS LIGHT. IN HIM THERE IS NO DARKNESS
AMEN.
LET US PRAY.
OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME.
THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE...
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.
GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES...
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US.
LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION AND DELIVER US FROM EVIL.
AMEN
DING DONG DING

DING DONG
DING DONG
THANKS, FATHER DUNN. HERE'S A LITTLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE SAINT BINGO'S MAINTENANCE FUND..
WE LIKE TO REFER TO OUR PARISH BY ITS ACTUAL NAME: SAINT BINGHAM'S.
IT'LL ALWAYS BE SAINT BINGO'S TO ME, FATHER.
OF COURSE. AND WE'LL BE SEEING YOU THIS SUNDAY..?
BOY, HE RAN OUT LIKE THE DEVIL WAS ON HIS TAIL.
IT WAS ALMOST AS IF PEOPLE WERE AFRAID TO CELEBRATE MASS HERE. HOW COME?
SAINT BINGHAM'S HAS A CERTAIN HISTORY, CODY.
THINGS HAPPENED HERE MANY YEARS AGO THAT MOST FOLKS WISH TO FORGET.
SOMETIMES UNWANTED MEMORIES COME BACK...
...TO HAUNT YOU.
WE GOTTA' TALK.
RIGHT NOW

ALONE.
UHHH, YES, CODY--I BELIEVE THE BASKETS NEED EMPTYING.
COULD YOU?.
YEAH, SURE.

YOU KNOW YOU'RE NEVER SUPPOSED TO COME HERE LIKE THIS. WHAT'S WRONG?
EVERY-THING'S SHOT TO HELL. EVERY-THING!

IT'S THE MINK. HE'S GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME. WAY TOO FAR...
SHHH! DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A CONFESSION?


"TELL US THE TRUTH, SLUMBURG! DOES THE BRATPACK DESERVE TO LIVE? CALLER NUMBER 8, YOU'RE ON THE AIR!"
'I AGREE WITH YOU, NEAL. I THINK SOMEONE OUGHT TO OBLIT-ERATE THOSE PUNKS!"
"AND WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED METHOD OF MAKING THEM KICK THE BUCKET?"
"WELLL, I BET A FRAGMENTA-TION GRENADE WOULD TRASH 'EM PRETTY GOOD!"

"YOU HAVE EXCELLENT TASTE, SIR. CALLER NUMBER 9, YOU'RE ON THE AIR!"
"I'M WITH YOU, NEAL. THOSE TWINKY SIDE-KICKS GOTTA GO!"
BLASTING CAPS
CLASS II
DANGER: EXPLOSIVES
"AND WE OUGHTA' SEND 'EM OUT IN STYLE!"
WUDDW!
KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDR
YO, IZOD. THOSE LITTLE SUCKERS MAY BE GNARLY...
BUT YOU BETCHA THEY BEEN KNOWN TO GO OFF IN YOUR HAND.
SO WHY DON'T YOU BE A GOOD LITTLE IZOD AND DROP THE BLASTING CAP BEFORE I END UP HAVING TO PICK UP YOUR PINKIES UP OFF THE PAVEMENT?
YOU HAPPEN TO SEE WHO LEFT THAT BOX OF DETO-NATORS IN THE DUMPSTER?
THEY'RE NOT MINE--

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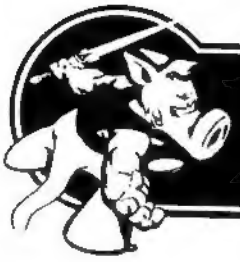

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